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WITH THE OVERTHROW of the Laval Cabinet apparently only a matter of days, France faces a political crisis for which no ready solution is evident. Confronted by clear-cut left majorities in both houses of Parliament, Laval may be defeated on any one of three vital issues. As was anticipated, the economy decrees promulgated last summer have aroused bitter hostility on the part of Socialists and other left groups. On the other hand, the continued flight from the franc indicates that the deflationary measures thus far adopted have not been sufficient to remove the basic financial maladjustments. Devaluation may still be necessary, though it is a step that no government is anxious to sponsor. Even more threatening at the moment is the question of the government's attitude toward Colonel Casimir de la Rocque's fascist Croix de Feu. After a recent battle in the streets in which members of the Croix de Feu attacked and injured more than a score of police and anti-fascists without themselves suffering any harm, Colonel de la Rocque demanded that the government "protect" his followers against the "revolutionaries" of the other parties. The left, in turn, has demanded the complete suppression of the fascist organization, an action which might provoke violence. A third issue is that of sanctions against Italy. Here again there is a sharp division of opinion, with the right demanding greater leniency in the treatment of Italy, and the left acutely dissatisfied with Laval's weak-kneed support of the League. Under ordinary circumstances one would expect Laval to be followed by a left government which would reflect the present sentiment of the country as a whole. But in view of the complexity of the situation, ex-Premier Herriot has served warning that he will not take office, while M. Blum could not command a stable majority in the Chamber. The only alternative is the unsatisfactory one of seeking a new leader who will continue the present compromise arrangement—a task which is becoming increasingly difficult as the months pass without a solution of basic problems.

SANCTIONS have now been in force against Italy for nearly two weeks. The results on the whole have been far more satisfactory than was deemed possible even a month ago. Reservations and exceptions by the League countries have been few and relatively unimportant, while Germany's embargo on essential raw materials, including tin, nickel, manganese, aluminum, zinc, iron, antimony, rubber, leather, wool, and hides, has proved an unexpected aid to the League powers. Nevertheless, it has been increasingly recognized that full effectiveness of the economic penalties cannot be obtained until the League adds petroleum, coal, and steel to the list of embargoed commodities. The products now barred from Italy, while important, are not immediately indispensable. Without oil, gasoline, and coal, on the other hand, Mussolini's war machine would be paralyzed. Ships, motor trucks, tanks, and aeroplanes are worthless without fuel, and Italy's present supply would not last more than from three to six months. An increasingly large share of the amount now being imported is coming from the United States. The fact that France and England have agreed not to force immediate action by the League to embargo these products does not relieve this country of responsibility for aiding Mussolini in his illegal invasion of Ethiopia. Both from the practical standpoint of keeping out of war and the moral one of avoiding assistance to an aggressor, it is imperative that we find some way of taking independent action to bar war supplies from Italy. Each day that we postpone this step strengthens the interests that would eventually draw us into the maelstrom.

THE OCTOBER TRADE REPORT shows the futility of moral suasion as a means of curbing those interests which would drag the United States into war. Despite repeated warnings from President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull against trading with belligerents, American exports to Italy in October—the first full month since the beginning of hostilities—were more than 10 per cent above the corresponding month last year. For the same month our exports to Italian Africa, previously very small, rose more than 700 per cent, and for the first ten months of 1935 were no less than 1,300 per cent higher than in 1934. The increase occurred in precisely those products most useful to Mussolini for war purposes. Exports of iron and steel scrap to Italy were valued at $454,000 in October, 1935, as compared with $179,000

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in October, 1934. Shipments of oil to Italy and Italian Africa totaled $1,185,000 this year as against $337,000 in the same month last year, an increase of over 200 per cent. Refined copper exports rose from $188,000 in October, 1934, to $534,000 in the corresponding month of 1935. A similar increase occurred in the sale of automobiles, tractors, and trucks, a large proportion of which went directly to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. Although several of the smaller oil companies have indicated their willingness to abide by Secretary Ickes's request that all shipments to Italy be discontinued, the larger concerns, particularly the Standard Oil group, have asserted that they will not suspend trading unless compelled to by the government. Meanwhile the Administration, loath to take action under the "implements-of-war" clause in the neutrality act, has gone as far as it can within the limits it has set itself. Secretary Hull has defined oil, copper, trucks, tractors, and scrap steel as "war materials," and indicated that cotton might soon be added to the list. Action has been taken to keep American ships from carrying supplies to Italy, and to prevent the sale of government-owned ships to Italy for scrap. None of these steps, however, is sufficiently drastic to stop unscrupulous American business interests from enriching themselves out of the war, or to prevent them from undermining the League in its attempt to substitute law for anarchy.

FROM THE OUTSET the Roosevelt Administration has made it clear that it was utterly indifferent to the naval conference called by Great Britain to meet in London early in December. We were not prepared, however, for the deliberate slap given to it by the President's appointment of Norman H. Davis, Rear Admiral W. H. Standley, chief of the bureau of naval operations, and Under Secretary of State William Phillips, as the American delegation. Not only is there no Cabinet officer on this list, but there is not a single man on it who is known as a genuine advocate of radical disarmament. With all respect to Mr. Davis's excellent intentions and arduous labors in previous conferences, he has been from the beginning in favor of our building up our fleet so that we might have in our hands a "good part of the pack" with which to sit into this game of international poker. The trouble is that all the other players are similarly eager to make as large a naval showing as possible, with the result that the Davis theory of having a big fleet with which to negotiate has not only hamstrung recent conferences but burdened the United States with the largest and most costly navy we have ever maintained.

AS IF TO EMPHASIZE still further how little the Administration is concerned with taking the lead in London, it is announced that Mr. Phillips will stay only a short time and then return to Washington. But that is by no means the worst. The President's appointment of Rear Admiral Standley verges on the scandalous, for this officer has just been going up and down the country denouncing all who demand a small navy. Speaking to the Military Order of the Loyal Legion he declared:

> Our every effort toward preparedness is actively opposed by certain influences, claimed to be patriotic and some of which are known to be otherwise, whose common aim has been to weaken the national defense by opposing the naval building program. . . . Unfortunately, they are still with us and constitute the greatest menace to the stability of our government and to our national security. . . . There is no doubt but that this sinister propaganda is tending to undermine Americanism and to jeopardize our national security.

The next day he repeated this address before the New York Chamber of Commerce, asking of it "active opposition to subversive influences tending to destroy the national defense." In other words Admiral Standley possesses the worst kind of reactionary naval mind and is obviously the last man who should have been selected to fight for disarmament in London. Plainly he will be just as lukewarm as one of his fellow-admirals who, on his return from an earlier conference, was reported in the press as saying that he was glad his mission had failed! Why Mr. Roosevelt did not appoint someone who is an ardent champion of disarmament and who really wants to see us lead in this cause, we can only explain on the ground that the President himself is not in favor of disarmament at this time.

EDWARD F. HUTTON, chairman of the board of directors of the General Foods Corporation, is much disturbed by the interpretation placed upon an article which he wrote for the house organ of the public-utilities corporations in which he called upon the great business interests of the country to "gang up" and overwhelm all opposition to their policies and plans. He now says that he would have withdrawn it, if he had not been ill, because of the President's new attitude toward business. He explains also that the phrase "gang up" was made in a perfectly harmless sense. It was a boyhood phrase, reminiscent only of the old swimming hole and free from any suggestion of the modern gangster. Very well. But the fact remains that he called upon the "business men of the country, the owners of stocks and bonds or any other property, the holders of insurance policies, and the depositors in banks" to get together "in one great group which will come to the help of any individual group when it is attacked." The incident cannot be passed over, for Mr. Hutton expressed in print the thought that is in the minds of innumerable corporation leaders and beneficiaries of special privilege. They say they do not want class war, but they are most eager for that great union of the right which Mr. Hutton, in his moment of passion, called for. If such a union should come about, with the almost unlimited sums which it could control, we should be face to face with a business fascism reaching out not only for all political power but for the complete smashing of the labor unions. Mr. Hutton's article, however much he may regret its appearance, is a useful warning.

THE "AUTONOMOUS" REGIME set up in the North China demilitarized zone is slight compensation to Japan for the setback in its plan for an "independent" state embracing the entire area north of the Yellow River. Of the many factors which may have contributed to the fiasco, the unity of the Chinese war lords and the unpredicted shift in British policy are the most significant. Within the past fortnight China has witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of all its important military leaders gathered at Nanking in a spirit of amity. That fact alone, since it was wholly unexpected by the Japanese, could easily explain Japan's sudden timidity about seizing three of the most important of China's historic eighteen provinces. Chinese resistance appears to

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have been materially strengthened by direct or tacit offers of British support. The rumor that Great Britain has arranged a loan to Nanking may have been premature, but there can be little doubt that the recent silver move was made on the advice of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, British financial expert. The added fact that information regarding the pending British loan to the Soviet Union was allowed to leak out at the moment when Japan was poised for a blow at North China is also significant. With the naval conference about to open in London and with the British playing a leading role at Geneva in the application of sanctions against an aggressor state, Japan has two excellent reasons for not wishing to incur British hostility at this time. For the Japanese military, however, these considerations will seem trivial as compared with the loss of face resulting from the failure of Japan's widely advertised coup in North China to come off on schedule. As a consequence, there is danger that, as in 1931, the counsel of the home government will be disregarded by ambitious militarists on the spot, a possibility which carries with it grave international complications.

ONCE MORE the United States is being inundated with gold from Europe. Within the past ten weeks approximately $600,000,000 worth of gold has been imported into this country and deposited in the vaults of the Federal Reserve banks. There was a period not so many years ago when such an influx of the precious metal would have been hailed as a sign of national prosperity. At that time it would automatically have become the basis for monetary and credit expansion which would have stimulated economic activity throughout the country. Today each new cargo of gold from abroad is the cause of acute embarrassment to our banking authorities. Already we have gold reserves of nearly ten billion dollars, or 45 per cent of the world's total supply. As a result we have three billions in excess bank reserves lying idle in our vaults, enough to support a credit expansion of approximately thirty billion dollars. The banking authorities are faced with a dilemma which is far more serious than that of 1927 and 1928. To allow the golden tide to continue will not only play havoc with the few remaining gold currencies and postpone indefinitely any hope of international stabilization, but will lay the basis for inflation in this country. Yet the tide cannot be checked without a fundamental change in tariff policy, which is politically unthinkable. Our policy of demanding gold and silver in exchange for our "normal" export surplus cannot be continued indefinitely. When the supply of available monetary metal becomes exhausted, we shall have to face the full implications of our insane commercial policies. The longer we delay the adjustment to an import surplus, the more difficult that adjustment will be. And, meanwhile, what are we to do with our tremendous idle reserves? Put the unemployed to work paving our streets with gold?

WHAT IS THE MEANING of the verb "to teach"? This simple question, apparently not susceptible of dictionary resolution, is agitating the District of Columbia at the moment. A rider to the District appropriation bill passed by the last Congress provided that salaries were not to be paid to teachers who "taught or advocated communism." The Board of Education has acted on the assumption that "teach" and "advocate" mean the same thing, and that a teacher may present his pupils with information about communism if he is careful to refrain from championing any such subversive doctrine. This interpretation has been upheld by E. Barrett Prettyman, corporation counsel for the District. In opposition the American Legion, the D. A. R., and the Hearst press have advanced the theory that the rider prohibits the dissemination of any information, however factual, on the subject of communism. The difficulties in which such an interpretation would involve a teacher are obvious, ranging all the way from an inability to discuss in a classroom one of the most important issues before the country today to a more specific inability to describe the form of government under which one of the largest nations of the earth, with a population of 170,000,000 people, is now living. Compared with this device for befuddling the young, the old fiction that babies were brought by the stork seems positively scientific. And our patriots should be warned that American children were too clever for the stork story; they will Find Out about communism! They will ask their parents why these matters are not discussed in school. Or if they are less frank, they will learn their communism in the street —that is to say, they will learn, not that communism is inferior to our own democratic form of government as their teachers might have taught them, but that it looks like a lot of fun for everybody.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT cases recently considered by the regional labor boards was the action brought against the Freihofer Baking Company, the largest bakery in Philadelphia, by its employees. The company is specifically accused of organizing a company union through the use of labor spies, thus violating an agreement with the Bakery Drivers' Union. How the company union was set up was described by John B. Backhus, president of the union, which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Backhus told the board that two company-union "specialists," Irving C. Franklin and Donald N. Stoner, arrived in Philadelphia from Jersey City, opened offices, and advertised for "college men to do investigating work." A friend of the union answered the advertisement and was one of four men hired. He recognized Franklin and Stoner as two men who had been ordered out of town by police last year when A. F. of L. officials discovered they were trying to organize a racketeering garage union. Since then, the "investigator" learned, they had been operating in the New York area and had formed company unions for chain groceries, meat-packing plants, shoe companies, and movie firms, most of them in Jersey City. The four "investigators" were given stenciled lists of Freihofer employees and were ordered to ingratiate themselves with the workers and find out what they thought about having "a union of their own—one the company would work with." On the basis of the reports turned in, carefully picked employees were taken in taxicabs to meetings at which the company union was organized. Six separate units were set up that night, one for each of the company's branches in Philadelphia, Camden, and Chester. Dues were set at twenty-five cents a month, in contrast with the two-dollar dues of the bona fide union. It is reported that the Philadelphia regional labor board is determined to make this case, which has aroused national interest although it has been ignored by the Philadelphia press, the beginning of a planned attack upon company unions and labor spies.

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Sea Power and the Far East

NO international conference has ever been called with less hope of success than the one which is to open at London on December 6 to discuss the possibility of continuing naval limitation. That it is being held at all in the face of almost certain collapse is due to the terrifying prospect of an unbridled naval race. Already the United States is spending close to a half-billion dollars annually for the doubtful protection afforded by its huge navy, while Japan's naval appropriations for the next fiscal year are expected to exceed 600,000,000 yen.* And these sums, tremendous though they are, might conceivably be doubled or tripled if Japan determined to build up to the American level. The threat of a Japanese-American naval race is complicated, moreover, by the possible repercussions of German naval construction, involving renewed Franco-Italian competition, on the British program. Presumably neither the United States nor Japan will allow Britain to strengthen its naval defenses without taking similar steps.

The gravity of the situation brings home more dramatically than ever the necessity for the United States adopting a clear-cut naval policy which is consistent with its national interests, particularly in the Far East. Our present policy is practically indistinguishable from that of the other great imperialistic powers. In essentials it is based on the sea-power theory of history evolved in the nineties by Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan. It is to this theory, developed by naval officers in this country and abroad, that we owe the widely accepted belief that a strong navy is essential to the economic and political welfare of a nation. This theory fits in very neatly with the basic trend of economic development during the past half-century. Capitalism, in order to function at its best, has been forced to seek new markets and new sources of raw materials. The extension of economic and political imperialism has in turn depended rather largely on sea power. Hence it logically follows that the country which has the most powerful navy has a tremendous advantage in the struggle for economic security. Since the only important undeveloped markets in the world are to be found in the East, our naval program has been predicated on the necessity of maintaining an Open Door in China, a policy which is now being directly challenged by Japan.

That war is inherent in a program of this type goes almost without saying. The use of naval power to further the economic interests of the respective countries must sooner or later lead to an actual trial of naval strength. Recognizing this danger, a number of influential writers have recently challenged the basic assumptions of the prevailing theory of navalism. They have pointed out that the vast majority of the American people have no interests in the Far East or elsewhere which in any sense justify the expenditure of a half-billion dollars annually for upkeep of the navy. The total of American investments in China, which are held by a handful of persons, does not equal half the amount which we spend annually on our fleet, while the cost of maintaining our interests, including the expense of the army and marine force on Chinese soil, the gunboats on Chinese rivers, and consular and extraordinary diplomatic expenses, is probably at least as great as the total profit obtained from our trade and investments. In view of these facts, Charles A. Beard and other writers have rejected the theory that the navy should be built to protect our overseas interests, and insist that its function should be solely that of defense of the American coast. Such a navy, it need scarcely be pointed out, would be vastly different from our present force. Battleships, heavy cruisers, and airplane carriers, which are by far the most expensive units in our fleet, are designed primarily for offensive purposes. A defensive naval program would emphasize submarines, mine-layers, destroyers, and possibly light cruisers. Apart from the United States, Japan, and Great Britain, no country in the world possesses a modern battleship over 10,000 tons—except for one recently launched French ship of 26,500 tons.

The logic of the foregoing criticism of the dominant theories of navalism is so strong that it has gained a surprising number of adherents. It would be difficult to disprove the assertion that as far as the vast majority of the American people are concerned the navy is more of a liability than an asset. But it is one thing to say that we should reduce our navy to a mere defensive force and another to hope that it can be done under conditions as we face them in the world today. Pacifists frequently fail to distinguish between the ideal policy in a socialist world and the policy which is likely to adopted by an imperialist power such as the United States. It is true that comparatively few Americans have any direct interest in the Far East. Nevertheless, we are living under an economic system which because of its faulty distribution of income creates inevitable surpluses. These surpluses must be disposed of if the economic machine is to function with even reasonable efficiency. And the great majority of our business leaders believe, rightly or wrongly, that a strong navy is necessary in order to assure ourselves an outlet for these surpluses.

Fortunately, acceptance of a realistic view of the present situation does not condemn us inevitably to an unrestrained race in armaments. Within the past few months the world has witnessed an amazing development in the possibilities of collective security. Granting that imperialist rivalries exist, collective action offers a means for restraining any nation which seeks to further its national aspirations by armed force. Application of this principle to the Far East would probably involve a five-power non-aggression pact between Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan, with provision for economic sanctions against any nation which resorted to war. Only when economic pressure directed by collective action has been demonstrated to be more effective than military force can we have any real assurance that jingoism can be overcome. Meanwhile, the existence of such a pact would remove the immediate threat of unlimited naval rivalries. Collective action has its dangers, and can in no sense be considered a final solution of the war problem, but it is the only hope of staving off a disastrous conflict in the Orient.

* At present the yen is quoted at about thirty cents, though it is much higher in terms of Japanese purchasing power.

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The C. R. Strike

SINCE Consumers' Research is the most important effective organization which seeks to protect the buying interests of the consumer, it is natural that the unfortunate dispute between its management and its personnel should have attracted more attention than a strike in an organization serving some 55,000 subscribers would ordinarily have done. Founded and operated by and for persons of liberal or radical sympathies, labor trouble in such a group came as a good deal of a shock not only to the subscribers themselves but to the liberal press and to self-conscious consumers as a whole. In response to requests made by the striking employees and by a group of subscribers, a special investigating committee under the chairmanship of Professor Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Theological Seminary, and including Roger Baldwin, George S. Counts, Norman Thomas, and Mrs. Helena Simmons, secretary of the New Jersey Consumers' League, made a careful survey of the strike situation which can hardly be considered other than an impartial and just report. The investigating committee examined documents, conducted a public hearing, and on October 31 sent a representative to meet with the board of Consumers' Research. Its report carefully reviews the events leading up to the strike, and describes the conduct of the strike itself and the attitude of the management toward the strikers.

It is possible to report here only the summary of the committee's findings. On the question of responsibility for the strike, the committee finds that the set-up of Consumers' Research—a non-profit membership corporation with five members, of whom Mr. and Mrs. Schlink and J. B. Matthews are a majority—lends itself to arbitrary and capricious management. The strike occurred after the dismissal of three employees who had been active in union organization. The report declares:

> The manner of the dismissal of the three employees, as well as the fact that the dismissals occurred simultaneously with the rise of the union, only make the more reasonable the union's demand that the men be reinstated first and the issues then arbitrated. But even this does not seem to the committee to have justified the union in breaking off so brusquely the negotiations with the management. . . . Impatience and ill-feeling were evident on both sides.

The committee found no basis in the charges by the management that the strike was a plot to seize control of the organization, that it was financed by big-business interests eager to destroy Consumers' Research, or, conversely, that it was a plot to further the interests of the Communist Party. The dispute seemed to the committee a bona fide struggle over the question of working conditions between management and a duly organized trade union, with membership in the American Federation of Labor. The committee found that every offer of mediation or arbitration made since the strike started had been refused by the management. These included not only offers made directly by the strikers but several proposals from outside organizations which there was every reason to believe were impartial. With respect to the conduct of the strike, the committee found that violence had been used on both sides, but that "the employment of armed guards by the management, the provocative tactics of these guards, the resort to violence, and the usual anti-labor tactics of employers largely contributed to a state of mind in which acts of desperation were almost inevitable."

The conclusion of the committee's report is worth quoting at length for the benefit particularly of the many readers of *The Nation* who are also subscribers to C. R.

> This strike, so unfortunate in its effects in undermining confidence in an agency unique in its service to its subscribers, would never have occurred if Consumers' Research were organized and controlled like other membership corporations. . . . Subscribers who support the institution have no part whatever in its control. Thousands of dollars of subscribers' money have been spent to carry out the management's present labor policy, without any general consultation with subscribers. . . .
>
> While we have attached blame to the strikers for their conduct of the negotiations and to aspects of their conduct during the strike, the responsibility rests chiefly upon the management . . . for aggravating a situation which in the early days it could have avoided, and later could have cured by accepting some form of mediation or arbitration.
>
> Consumers' Research, which now regards itself as sufficiently staffed with "loyal employees" to continue its functions, will not succeed in reestablishing public confidence, probably not even the confidence of most of its subscribers, until it has adopted a policy of fair dealing with all its employees based upon collective bargaining in place of an autocratic paternalism.

Heil Profits!

IN February, 1932, Thyssen introduced Hitler to an exclusive gathering of German industrialists. As events have turned out, he was performing a real service for big business as well as for the Nazis. The millions which were poured into the coffers of the National Socialist Party have proved to be an exceptionally good investment. When Hitler pointed out at the 1934 congress of the Nazi Party that "the national revolution is ended; it has fulfilled all its hopes," he merely echoed the sentiments of his benefactors. To Thyssen, Krupp, Bosch, and the rest of the industrialists the Nazi revolution has given what they bargained for—complete control of industry without interference by labor unions, and a new era of profits.

Even in 1933 dividends began to flow more freely. Of 140 corporations, 32 did not change their dividends, 29 resumed dividends, 20 increased their payments, and 11 reduced them. But that was just a start. Just as our New Deal has been a blessing to American stockholders, National Socialism has opened the flood gates of profits for German big business. According to a recent report of the Reich Bureau of Statistics covering 1,024 joint-stock companies with an aggregate share capital of 8,200,000,000 marks, which is 12 per cent of all active companies and 41 per cent of the share capital of all German companies, the majority of business enterprises realized a profit in the calendar year 1934. Losses dwindled to the lowest point in many years, and for the first time since the crisis total profits of all companies substantially exceeded losses.

Leaving out of consideration banking and insurance companies, the industrial companies with a share capital of

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6,600,000,000 marks, after writing off some 713,000,000 marks for depreciation, showed aggregate profits of 348,000,000 and losses of 41,000,000 marks. A more detailed report of 180 corporations shows the following changes:

57 corporations did not change their dividends.
64 corporations raised their dividends.
47 corporations resumed dividend payments.
8 corporations decreased their dividends.
4 corporations reported a loss.
20 of the total of 180 corporations increased their dividend total from 9,820,000 marks to 44,970,000 marks.

As might be expected, not all concerns shared equally in this golden harvest. The firms that did not increase their earnings were mainly breweries and food and textile factories. Among the firms that reported losses were the German Gramophone Company and the Vogtländer Camera Works, both producers of articles that are more or less luxuries.

Significantly, heavy industry, automobile and cement factories, and chemical and electrical enterprises have made the largest profits. These industries are deeply involved in Hitler's rearmament program. They are controlled by precisely those men who gave Hitler the money to keep the Brown and Black Shirts supplied with blackjacks, shirts, puttees, and cigarettes. The following are a few of the larger of these concerns:

	Net Profits or (—) Loss	
	1933	*1934*
	(in marks)	
Mining and Steel		
Gute Hoffnungshütte	—2,700,000	2,662,000
Ilseder Hütte	140,000	3,307,000
Hochofenwerk Lübeck	301,000	2,300,000
Heavy Industry		
Schwarzkopf A.G. Berlin	36,000	660,300
Westfälische Drahtindustrie (Subsidiary of Krupp A.G.)	29,000	542,000
Mannesman Röhrenwerke	880,000	3,505,000
Krupp A.G. Essen	—3,069,000	6,551,000
Felten and Guillaume	872,700	3,739,400
Chemicals		
Bemberg A.G. (Rayon)	76,000	1,044,000
Harburg Gummi	67,000	431,500
Motors		
Daimler Benz (Trucks)	2,470,000	4,120,000
Electric		
Siemens Schuckert		1,323,000
Robert Bosch A.G.	1,816,000	3,510,000

From this survey, which covers only a small fraction of Germany's industrial corporations, it is apparent that the dividend total for 1934 lies much closer to a billion than to 500 million marks.

Hitler dividends are taken from the pockets of producers and consumers. In 1932 wages and salaries paid to 12,800,000 persons then gainfully employed in Germany amounted to 26 billion marks. This makes an average income of about 2,031 marks. On this basis the 13,307,000 persons employed in 1933 and the 15,530,000 working in 1934 should have received the aggregate of 27 billion and 31.5 billion marks respectively. What they actually got was 26.3 billion in 1933, and 29.6 billion in 1934. Thus we find that during the first two years of National Socialism, which proclaims that "the duty of the state is to provide the necessaries of life and not to secure the highest profits for capital," German capital appears to have taken from its people in wages alone 2,559,000,000 marks.

Do Gangsters Speak Verse?

"WINTERSET," Maxwell Anderson's bold dramatic experiment now current at the Martin Beck Theater, seems to be gradually establishing itself as a solid success. Often enough the popularity of a play means nothing at all, but this is a special case which may possibly have a real significance. It is true that a few other attempts have been made in recent years to treat a contemporary theme poetically, but with the exception of Mr. O'Neill no other playwright has achieved real popularity with a genuinely poetic treatment of a serious contemporary subject. Of course Mr. Anderson himself wrote the successful "Mary of Scotland," but that was a picturesque historical piece and in no way challenged the current assumption that only some form of naturalism is appropriate to the contemporary scene. Yet that is exactly what "Winterset" does. Its theme was suggested by the Sacco-Vanzetti case; most of the members of the dramatis personae are outcasts or gangsters; yet the method of the piece is unrealistic to the point of permitting even the gangsters to speak an elevated language, and some section of the public is finding it possible to adjust itself to the unfamiliar convention.

Naturally audiences are by no means of one accord. Neither, for that matter, were the critics, several of whom dismissed the play as a manifest absurdity. But the most common argument brought against it and usually delivered with an air of great finality has the disadvantage of proving too much. "Who," it is asked, "ever heard of a gangster who spoke in verse?" But who, for that matter, ever heard of a hero or a king who did so either? History does not record that any Moorish general in the employ of the Venetian state ever delivered his orders in iambic pentameter, and it does not seem likely that any fourteen-year-old Italian girl was suddenly gifted with Juliet's ability to extemporize immortal verse. The real question to be answered is the same in every case. Does the convention justify itself?

Every dramatic author of necessity endows his characters with a greater articulateness than most persons possess in real life. The most realistic prose dialogue is more efficient as utterance than the speech of everyday conversation. As the tension of a play rises, the effectiveness of the dialogue must rise with it; and when that tension reaches a certain point, poetry, the most effective way in which language can be used, becomes the only suitable medium.

In recent times the drama as an art form has suffered from the fact that its necessary brevity puts it at a disadvantage in comparison with the novel. It can succeed only by being very much more intense than fiction usually is, and it may be that it can succeed only by abandoning the attempt to compete with the novel in naturalism. Without exaggerating the significance of a single play, one may recognize the possibility that "Winterset" has an importance even beyond that conferred by its very considerable merits as an individual work. If the audience finds it acceptable, then it may help to break the grip which naturalism has somehow managed to secure on the modern theater.

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Issues and Men

The Great British Referendum

IT is a curious fact that it was a peace vote which more than anything else drove the National Government in England into the aggressive and dangerous stand it has taken against Mussolini and into assuming the leadership of the League of Nations. I am well aware that many people still believe that the only possible explanation is British self-interest, the fear that if Mussolini conquers Ethiopia he will go farther and strive to make the Mediterranean an Italian instead of a British lake—how well founded that anxiety is was shown in an article in *The Nation* of October 16. But whatever the contributing causes, I remain of the opinion that the votes of nearly 12,000,000 English men and women polled by the British League of Nations Association last spring, under the leadership of Lord Robert Cecil, was the most potent force in the vitalizing of the English government on this issue and in its sudden determination to make the League of Nations justify itself and stop the unprovoked war against Ethiopia. Its upholding that stand in the recent election campaign resulted in its winning a larger majority than had been expected. It seems to me plain that Lord Robert Cecil—if he deserves the credit for the referendum—may well be called the savior of the League. For everybody agrees that if the League had remained inactive in the face of this Italian iniquity, it would have become merely a subject of contempt and ridicule.

Instead, the League has won millions of adherents all over the globe. Here in America there are innumerable people who for the first time are ready to join it—of course with certain reservations to prevent our being liable for a part in League-ordered wars. If the League really puts its pacific boycott through, preserves every foot of Ethiopia, humbles Italy without firing a shot, and thereby demonstrates a new technique in stopping wars and preserving, in Wilson's words, "the rights of small nations everywhere," it will have achieved the greatest step forward toward the abolition of war yet taken. It is impossible to deny the truth of what Winston Churchill has just said—that "such a system of pains and penalties was never proclaimed against a single state in the whole history of the world. We are in the presence of a memorable event." Even if it should turn out that England's sole motive in resurrecting the League was to safeguard itself against Mussolini and Hitler, that would not detract from the credit due to the British government if the intervention proves a success.

It is worth while, in view of what has happened, to reprint the referendum figures. Here they are: total votes cast, 11,627,000. Now when this vote was proposed and while it was being taken, the government sneered at it and the Tories and diehards said it would prove nothing. It was supposed that it would peter out for lack of funds. However, the money was found, and as the votes rolled in, the Liberal and Conservative politicians sat up and took notice. They could not deny that 11,627,000 votes out of a population of 44,000,000 was a genuine cross-section of the British public. It was too large for the Baldwins and Churchills to ignore, and so overwhelmingly one-sided as to make it impossible for anybody to deny that it was an unanswerable popular mandate. Winston Churchill himself has been one of the greatest critics and antagonists of the League. Today he marvels and approves without reservation. It is as if the ghost of Henry Cabot Lodge had appeared to acclaim the event and to beg the Senate to vote us into the League.

Whether or not this pacific boycott leads to actual hostilities, whether or not the Ethiopian war, as Raymond G. Swing and many others think, proves to be a "little war" carefully prepared in advance to save Mussolini's face, to be ended by a cession of Ethiopian territory to Italy, nothing can dim that British referendum. It answers those who say that you cannot have a people voting on questions of war and peace. It sets a precedent of which every country should take note, and especially the United States. There were some who begged that alleged great democrat (with a small *d*) Woodrow Wilson to take a vote of the country in April, 1917, to ascertain what was the will of the American people. Mr. Wilson wrung his hands. It could not be done because it never had been done. There was no machinery for it in the Constitution. A few weeks later General Hugh Johnson and General Crowder set up overnight the draft boards for registering millions of young men—which proved conclusively that it would have been no task at all to take a national vote on the war. Now the British have shown the way. No American statesman can henceforth seek to hide behind the Wilsonian excuses. Lord Robert Cecil has demonstrated that it can be done by private subscription in short order, by a machinery created on the spur of the moment and run chiefly by unpaid workers. This polling of about one-quarter of a great people has had results which have stirred the entire world.

I hope it is true that some of our peace organizations are planning a similar vote in the United States. The wonder is that our League of Nations Association has not already launched it. Perhaps they are waiting for the Presidential elections to come and go. I hope not. It is so vital and so thrilling a moment and President Roosevelt is so big-navy mad that there would seem to be no time to lose before letting the Administration and our army and navy lobbies, our fighting admirals and generals, know just where the country stands. Of course everything will depend upon the questions selected for submission. I for one cannot but believe that, whether the vote is for our entry into the League or not, it will be emphatically and overwhelmingly for our keeping out of war at all costs and using all our influence in behalf of those who are striving to make the League what its founders wished it to become—the destroyer of war.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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MISS PEACE: "Somebody Is Calling for Me."

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Sanctions *vs.* Neutrality: A Debate

The Case for Sanctions

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

SINCE this is a brief debate I must avert disputes over definitions. By sanctions I mean economic sanctions. I am opposed to American participation in military sanctions. And I advocate economic sanctions only if in our own judgment the Kellogg pact has been violated. My case for sanctions, then, rests on the assertion, first, that there can be no law governing international relations unless behind it lies the ultimate certainty of collective enforcement, and, second, that economic sanctions are the most effective nonviolent method to effect the outlawry of war.

I base my opposition to neutrality on my understanding that it requires equal treatment of two belligerents without regard to the nature and origin of their conflict. If a country is guilty of unprovoked aggression, the policy of neutrality proclaims an indifference which is purely rhetorical. There can be no indifference, not only because unprovoked aggression is illegal, but because it encourages subsequent aggressions if no collective effort successfully punishes it, and because, fearing its repetition, other countries will increase their armaments. As I understand the case for American neutrality, it presupposes that without equal treatment America becomes partisan, gives help to the aggrieved nation, and ultimately may be committed for economic reasons to the victory of that state, even to the point of having to go to war on its behalf. If I believed that partisanship must have this consequence, I should accept neutrality. But I believe that partisan help can and should be limited. Not only that, I believe that a fully worked-out system of economic sanctions, in particular the embargo on imports from an aggressor state, would not need to be used often if ever again. One demonstration would be enough to reveal its power. If the demonstration can now be made, no country with any substantial foreign exports will dare to go to war illegally knowing it will lose its export trade. Had Japan known this before the Manchurian venture, the militarists at that time would not have overridden the politicians in Tokyo. Had Mussolini known it last summer, he would have accepted the proposals of the Committee of Five of the League, which Haile Selassie accepted. The potential strength of sanctions is far greater than was previously guessed.

But sanctions cannot work if they are not universal or nearly so. The outlawry of wars of aggression may be impossible without American cooperation in economic coercion. The United States can give this cooperation with the utmost consistency. It originated the Kellogg pact; that treaty with Italy became the law of the land; it can only refuse to join in enforcing the law if it is indifferent to the law. Joining League states in enforcing our own law does not mean joining the League. The only issue of law involved at Geneva, in the case against Italy, is the law of the Kellogg pact, for there is no basic difference between a war of unprovoked aggression, as defined by the League, and war used as an instrument of national policy, as defined by the pact.

I expect my opponent to argue that the League is serving as the tool of selfish British imperial interests. But I think this interpretation, true as far as it goes, does not serve her unless it is the only truth, and the whole truth. I should be the first to say that British imperial interests are deeply involved in the dispute with Italy. I also expect a Conservative British government to behave imperialistically. But I should be startled if she dismissed the action at Geneva as no more than the dictation of British imperialist interests. We already know how British imperialism behaves when home opinion is not aroused in favor of the League. We saw it in the Manchurian crisis. The British imperialists compromised with the aggressor, kept on the good side of him, to protect their interests. The technique I should have expected in Ethiopia, had British imperialists been free from public pressure, is a deal with Italy. Mussolini expected it. He offered the British every safeguard in northwest Ethiopia. To this day he cannot understand why it was not accepted. And the British imperialists, having "split" with Mussolini in Africa, would have proceeded to strengthen their navy and their Mediterranean bases. That would have been traditional imperialism. But the British government went to the League because it was driven there by British public opinion. And what aroused British public opinion was not Italy but Hitler, the collapse of disarmament, and the conviction that a war was impending which would destroy civilization. The revival of the League appeared as the last hope of establishing a system of law in Europe. Sir Samuel Hoare, reading this mandate from the country, laid down a new doctrine of sanctions at Geneva. Britain will support them, actively and increasingly, only in cases of unprovoked aggression and in all such cases. He expanded and confirmed this doctrine in subsequent communications with Paris. This doctrine puts an end to the old League, whose sanctions were dedicated to enforcing the peace treaties more than to peace. Britain has now finished the job of severing the treaties from the Covenant. Hitler began it; Britain went on with it in the naval agreement with him; and now there is this new doctrine. The doctrine, in effect, limits coercion under the Covenant to violations of the Kellogg pact. This has happened so recently that its full import is not understood in this country. America's fundamental objections to the League, as a system of enforcement, have been removed. We can cooperate with the League because it is doing no more than putting teeth into our own peace pact.

Admittedly, the British are serving their imperialist interests. But is that the only point? If it is, obviously neutrality becomes our unescapable policy. But I contend that this argument is not of service to the other side. If there is any peace motive at all at Geneva, any chance whatever of establishing a peace of law, that chance is worth taking, whatever imperial interests are served. The task of curbing imperialism and producing the economic equilibrium which will reduce the urge to war can be performed in only two ways, either by war itself or by establishing a legal peace system. That is the problem at Geneva. And the League is making the effort to outlaw war. To dismiss that effort

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because it favors the British Empire is about as blind as policy can be. If there were five, ten, even twenty chances to one against the success of League policy, neutrality rather than cooperation with the League would be indefensible. For it would mean the abandonment of the hope for law before hope was gone. When the hope for law is gone anarchy reigns. That means that we in America shall have a war machine too, and the ascendancy of the military mind. I am sure the pacifists are sincere in wanting to make it impossible for us to take part in another war. But I believe that neutrality is a short-sighted way of serving that purpose. The only sure way to stay out of wars is to establish peace.

What Neutrality Means

By DOROTHY DETZER

THE question that the American people will face in January is not whether sanctions imposed by the League of Nations are quite wise or effective for League countries, but whether the Congress of the United States should substitute for the present inadequate law new neutrality legislation which will give the President the power to cooperate with the League in imposing sanctions on an aggressor, or whether the legislation should be mandatory upon the President to apply embargoes on both sides.

Unfortunately, the present law, which will die on March 1, has been labeled neutrality legislation. It is not neutrality legislation, and only came by this misnomer because of the determination of a growing body of public opinion to abandon our traditional "neutral rights," "freedom of the seas" and so on. It is now quite clear that these "neutral rights" were the little paths which inevitably led the United States into the road of war in 1917. The present law, therefore, is not really neutrality legislation but embargo legislation.

I realize, of course, that those who advocate that our government cooperate with the League in applying sanctions against Italy are as opposed to war as I am, and that they believe that such action would help in bringing to an end the tragic war now in progress. In the present situation I contend that America has up to November 18 through its so-called neutrality legislation applied the most effective sanction that any country has applied, but that to lay embargoes only on the aggressor is inevitably to risk the United States being drawn into a League war.

How can we know whether the British navy will be set in action to guarantee the effectiveness of economic sanctions? I am one of those who cannot forget that seventy-two British warships are now waiting in the Mediterranean and that they were dispatched there by the British government before the League applied sanctions, and while England continued to sell to Italy raw materials essential for war. Nor can I forget the report of the Committee of Five to the Council at the September meeting of the League. That report to my mind was one of the most amazing and hypocritical documents yet produced by the League. The independence and integrity of Ethiopia were not even an issue. The plan provided for the partitioning of Ethiopia, not territorially but functionally. The Committee of Five evolved a new type of imperialism within the framework of the League, and with it the independence of Ethiopia vanished. It is true that the Emperor was ready to accept the plan, but Haile Selassie was faced with a choice of two evils. The independence and integrity of his country were not a consideration. Imperialism imposed by a group of nations under the aegis of the League must have seemed less objectionable than subjugation to the imperialism of Italy. Fortunately, however, the recommendations of the Committee of Five were not adopted by the Council even though Ethiopia was prepared to make this Hobson's choice. Such "Christian" nations as Russia and Turkey refused to accept it. I contend, therefore, that the League powers were taking action against Mussolini not in defense of Ethiopia but primarily in defense of their own imperialist interests.

On October 2 I sailed from England for the United States, and for several days the British press had carried British casualty lists of dead in a splendid little private war which England was carrying on all by itself against a country as independent as Ethiopia. Between the northwest frontier of India and Afghanistan lies an independent territory occupied by the Mohmand tribes. These tribes are in about the same state of "backwardness" as the people of Ethiopia. The immediate reason for British action on the northwestern frontier was very much the same as that which started the Italian-Ethiopian conflict. "Incidents on the border" were the immediate cause, but the real reason lay in the fact that the tribal chieftain of this independent territory was harboring 2,000 refugees who had escaped from Indian prisons, where they had been placed by the British government for working for Indian independence! The press dispatches on the first day, in which ninety-two British dead were reported, stated that "very heavy casualties indeed" were inflicted on the enemy. And we are horrified by the brutality of Italy when we learn that 2,000 Ethiopians have been bombed by Italian airmen! Yet the bombing of natives by British airmen occurred only three weeks after Sir Samuel Hoare said at Geneva, "We believe that small nations are entitled to a life of their own . . . and that backward nations are, without prejudice to their independence and integrity, entitled to expect that assistance will be afforded to them by more advanced peoples. . . ."

Whatever action the Congress takes on redrafting and extending the present law, it is surely important to anticipate future situations as well as the present crisis. The test of the legislation, it seems to me, would be to make it so tight and rigid that America could not be drawn into this present war through the gate of economic sanctions any more than it might have been drawn in by the retention of our old neutrality rights and our insistence on the freedom of the seas. The present crisis is certainly only a curtain-raiser for what may come when Germany breaks loose, or when Japan goes too far in the Far East.

Another serious question involved in this legislation is that of the war-making power. The Constitution provides that the war-making power of the government should rest in the Congress. Real efforts are under way now for a constitutional amendment to take away that power even from the Congress and place it in the hands of the people through a referendum. It would seem a dangerous departure, indeed, for democratic government to transfer this power to the Executive, even through the indirect medium of permissive neutrality legislation. There can surely be no way of our

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knowing whether the present economic sanctions will be extended to military sanctions; and military sanctions are war. This is the heart of the whole problem.

With all due respect to the fine and splendid spirit of the President and the excellent statements which he and Secretary Hull have made, it seems too great a risk to lodge this power with the Executive. Presidents can die. Imagine permissive legislation in the hands of Garner! And new Presidents can be elected. Imagine such power in the hands of a Republican Administration!

The Italian-Ethiopian conflict is not the only danger situation in the world. To the United States the Far East presents a far more knotty problem, and when the Open Door is really threatened, I should hope that the neutrality legislation would be so rigid that the Executive would not have the power to risk the United States in war.

Rebuttal: *R. G. S.*

MISS DETZER'S argument falls into three chapters: the first, defining what "neutrality" really means; the second, condemning the action and motives of the League; the third, arguing for mandatory legislation. Her definition of neutrality will come as a surprise to the isolationists, who, I imagine, think of the neutrality resolution first—and perhaps last—as forbidding our partisanship in any foreign conflict. In so far as it bespeaks our determination not to uphold traditional neutral rights, I accept it whole-heartedly. But what I do not accept is the inference of indifference to the nature of a conflict, and the principle of equal treatment. For this is indifference to legality, if the war is illegal. And this abandons the one hope of peace, which is to establish it on a legal footing.

The second argument, as I anticipated, attacks the motives of the League, and of Britain in particular, and goes even farther than I expected. Surely Miss Detzer does not speak literally when she says, "The League powers were taking action . . . not in defense of Ethiopia, but primarily in defense of their own imperial interests." This is partly true of Britain; it is not true of France and Russia, the only other powers involved. It is not true of any of the smaller states, which are vitally interested in a demonstration that war can be outlawed. I repeat, that Britain has imperialist interests in the conflict with Italy does not alter the case unless this is the complete, exclusive truth, which I am certain it is not.

In her third argument Miss Detzer is afraid that economic sanctions will lead to military sanctions, and that once we take part in the first we inevitably must become partners in the second. But I specifically rejected American participation in military sanctions. All we need to do, if a blockade is declared, is to accept it, and accept any list of contraband the blockader issues. There is no compulsion to fight unless our interests drive us to it; and no application of economic sanctions of itself can create such an interest.

Despite Miss Detzer's quite comprehensible indignation against British hypocrisy and against the Report of the Committee of Five, I feel that on the real issue we are not far apart. We both want America to stay out of war; we both reject military sanctions; I believe that a chance remains for outlawing war which she ignores. And in ignoring it she takes a leap toward a calamity that has not befallen the world, and that may possibly be averted if national wars can be eliminated. In a system of peace, we both should agree I am sure, the first task would be to work for the economic equilibrium on which enduring peace depends.

Rebuttal: *D. D.*

I AM surprised that Mr. Swing interprets my argument as an "inference of indifference to the nature of a conflict and the principle of equal treatment," and contends that "this is indifference to legality if the war is illegal."

I would certainly grant that the United States cannot be neutral and is not neutral in the present conflict. The American people are certainly aroused and horrified and indignant over the brutal aggression of Mussolini against a weak and helpless nation.

But I am not neutral either in the case of Britain and the Mohmand tribes; nor am I neutral in the case of France, whose cavalry in the middle of September fought a bitter battle at Dedeau against Moroccan subjects who rose against the theft of their property by French tax-collectors. I submit that Mr. Swing might have had a case on this question of our "equal treatment" in the present conflict had the League acted to maintain the independence and integrity of Ethiopia. The report of the Committee of Five, it seems to me, completely destroyed that case. But I grant that I am indifferent to the conflict between the British and Italian imperialisms, and indifferent to that "legality" which defines bombing as "police action" when used against frontier tribes and as "war" when the powers are involved.

I cannot believe that Mr. Swing really means "that the one hope of peace is to establish it on a legal footing." Peace imposed on a "status quo of injustice and hatred" no matter how legally cannot last. Justice and disarmament and a basic economic readjustment of our present order, not legality, are the only true hopes of peace.

Mr. Swing deplores my attack on the motives of the League and especially of Great Britain. I grant that governments act on mixed motives, but does Mr. Swing forget that the safety of the routes to India broke up the Turkish empire, spilled blood in the Crimean slaughter, and was a primary cause of the World War when the German Bagdad railway became a real threat to Britain's interest in the East? As for the other great powers, France wavered a long time before it decided to abandon its new-made friendship with Italy and agreed to support League sanctions. Surely its relationship with Germany and not the independence of Ethiopia brought it to that decision. Russia, I grant, refused to accept the report of the Committee of Five. But surely Russia was not unaware of Hitler and his hankering for the Ukraine.

On the real issues Mr. Swing and I are not far apart. One's point of view on the whole matter depends upon whether one puts collective security first or keeping out of war first. Surely the day must come when the nations of the world must cooperate for the security of all. Perhaps the application of economic sanctions will prove to be the best and most effective strategy, but only if divorced from any military backing, and only if steps are taken to secure equality of economic opportunity for all nations.

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David Gets the Third Degree

By EMANUEL H. LAVINE

DAVID GOLDBERG was twenty-five years old but in worldly wisdom he was no more than ten. Besides being simple-minded he had bad health, and his physical and mental handicap kept him from finding steady employment. His elder brother, however, contributed toward David's support and that of his aged, extremely orthodox Jewish parents.

David was brought up virtually in the shadow of a synagogue, and although he and his parents later moved to a section somewhat removed from his boyhood district, he never failed to attend the orthodox services in the synagogue where he had been confirmed in his faith when he reached his religious majority at thirteen. Regularly, year in and year out, Friday evening saw him with his stooped shoulders, his weak blue eyes, and his heavy shock of brown hair, sitting in the seat which had become his by right of custom. Orthodox to the extreme, he would not carry a purse on the Sabbath or, when it rained, an umbrella.

It was a Friday evening in early summer. At home David and his parents had just finished the Sabbath meal of fish, rich golden soup, and chicken.

"This evening is one of special importance," David said eagerly. "The great rabbi from Jerusalem is to talk at the *Schule* tonight. I must leave at once so that I shall not be late."

"Go, David," his father said. "We cannot be there. It will be for you to listen closely to each learned word of the distinguished rabbi. Then you shall tell us all he said. A good Sabbath, my son. Go in health and come in health."

Having received the paternal and maternal kiss, David walked to the *Schule*. The words of the learned rabbi were filled with rabbinical learning and logic, his theories expounded in a soothing singsong. David, listening to every word, felt that he must not miss a syllable, for his parents would derive such pleasure, even at second hand, from the wisdom of the great teacher. When, just before midnight, he started on his walk home he felt like some messenger carrying precious gifts. His spirit soared but his weak body could not keep up with it. Panting he found himself skirting a small park and he sank down on a bench. His exhaustion and his mind at peace with all mankind lulled him into a sleep.

The occasional roar of a street car or a delivery truck did not disturb him. How long he slept he did not know, but his awakening was a rude one. The heavy hand of a policeman struck his shoulder with terrific force, sending him sprawling from his slumped sitting position to the pavement. He blinked, believing it was a horrible nightmare. A kick in his side as he lay on the sidewalk brought him to full consciousness. A revolver gleamed wickedly, and a voice bellowed: "Who the hell y'think you're foolin'? Where did the other fellows run?"

That face, never showing much intelligence, now looked blank and puzzled as that of an infant. The towering bulk of the brass-buttoned figure was terrifying. The gun, from which he shrank in mortal fright, was held close to his head. "Where did the guys who helped you go?" the voice bellowed.

David, dragged to his feet by the painful process of having his brown shock of hair yanked upward and him with it, attempted to stutter something. He received a slap across the face from a broad and heavy hand. His head spun. Suddenly he found his wrist held in a handcuff and himself dragged to a corner where two other policemen stood. They bellowed at him, too. So bewildered was David that he burst into tears.

"That's the old boloney," the police officers roared. "Save it for the judge—when you get to him."

One of them gave him a well-placed boot with his heavily soled size-eleven shoe. Then they dragged him to the station house for "questioning." The "questions" weren't asked, they were given—in the forms of kicks, slaps, and short jabs which sent the frail body of the questionee sprawling to the station-house floor. Then he was yanked upright by his hair, the thick brown hair which was damp and matted above the terror-stricken face.

"We shoot lousy rats who won't talk," was the way one of the questioners put it, brandishing a gun in the sharply lighted room and causing the bewildered eyes of David to distend in horror. It was only then that David heard dimly the words "burglary" and "robbery." One of the detectives at the station was drafting a "voluntary confession," putting in both the questions and answers. It was something about breaking into a paint-store with two other men. No one mentioned anything about constitutional rights or warned him that anything he might say would be held against him. Anything he wouldn't say was being held against him—viciously so.

"You come clean, kid, and we'll let you loose," one grizzled detective said, in a pseudo-hearty voice to the quailing David. When he didn't understand, slowly shaking his head, which ached from the many buffets and hair-yankings, the hearty-voiced one ripped out a string of oaths and cuffed him on the side of the head so that he staggered. A rookie cop, brought in to witness how the thing was done, asked: "How can you let him go if he admits the robbery?"

"You'll learn, kid," the veteran detective chortled. "I only promise him that but it don't mean anything."

In the inquisition chamber the air was stifling. Sweat dripped from the faces of all, ran in small rivulets down cheeks and hands. One detective, hauling out the finger-printing apparatus, pulled David toward the table to take his prints and perhaps trace some previous record. Pressing the shaking fingers of David into the heavy inking pad, the detective then held them on a white sheet. The perspiration made it difficult to procure clear imprints. After finishing the job, which looked messy, one of the detectives became so enraged that he picked up the inking pad and struck David across the forehead. A small gash and large bruise knocked the tottering victim unconscious. He lay on the floor, tears mingling with a thin stream of blood running down his face.

Only the intense heat in the room brought surcease for

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David. After one detective said casually, "You birds might have a corpse on your hands if you don't quit; the kid don't look strong," he was tossed into the cooler until morning. But before he was allowed to nurse his aching body, they shoved a pen at him to sign the finger-print record. David shrank from the pen as from a red-hot poker. He never wrote on the Sabbath. When he said as much, great guffaws echoed in the room. Guffaws first and then more cuffs on the side of the head, one of them with a telephone book. Dazed, he scrawled his name on the papers which accused him of burglary, robbery, resisting arrest.

Not one of the police officers bothered to acquaint David with his right to communicate with friends or relatives free of charge. All that David wanted was to get away from his tormentors and lie in some corner. That wish they acceded to when they threw him into a cell. The iron cot, devoid of mattress, since mattresses are "unsanitary," was chained back against the wall. Too weary and dazed to undo the cot fastenings, David lay on the cool, dirt-incrusted concrete and there lapsed into grateful unconsciousness.

In the early dawn David awakened, his limbs cramped, his head buzzing with excruciating sharp pains, and somehow or other he realized all that had befallen him. Even had he been accorded the privilege of using a telephone he was too orthodox to use one on the Sabbath. All that he knew was that it was the Sabbath and he was in a prison. He forgot that he had relatives or friends. All he could envisage was the cell in which he stood trembling and aching in every joint of his bones—an abandoned soul punished in Hades for some frightful crime of which he knew nothing.

His old parents, distracted after hours of waiting for his return, were desperate as the day dawned. Never before had David been away from home all night. They turned to the synagogue to give them some sort of solace, weeping bitter tears that for the first time since he had been confirmed at thirteen David was not by their side on a Sabbath morning. Too religious to use the telephone to call their eldest son, Sam, they stayed in the synagogue all the morning and until late in the afternoon.

David, meanwhile, was belabored by a new shift of police officers in the morning. They cuffed and beat him again, still seeking to get the "voluntary" confession. Finally, in disgust, he was handcuffed to a short swarthy fellow charged with slashing two garment strikers with a knife, and taken to police headquarters in a patrol wagon. When he protested vigorously against being forced to ride on the Sabbath, he was given two swift kicks, and his handcuff partner gave his wrist a jerk for good measure. The humiliation of riding on the Sabbath far surpassed the physical pain he was undergoing, and David wept helplessly.

At headquarters he was again booked, then photographed and dragged to the basement elevator to wait for the morning line-up. When the time came, he was shoved on to a raised platform upon which a bank of Klieg lights shone, virtually blinding him. He could not see the massed detectives who stood behind the lights, unseen by those who were lined up, and casually glanced at the faces of the malefactors. He heard something again about burglary and robbery.

Handcuffs replaced, he was again shoved into the locked steel cage on wheels and finally brought into court, a battered, perspiring, blood-flecked, semi-hysterical "desperado." The judge turned to the arresting officer.

"What are you charging this youth with?" he asked.

"Burglary, robbery, resisting arrest, and refusing to aid the police," the officer replied promptly, a bit proudly.

"What was he doing when you arrested him?" the judge asked.

"Nothing. Well, he was pretending to be asleep on a bench," responded the officer.

"Nothing?" the judge shouted. "Why did you arrest him?"

"There was a burglary in a small paint-store on my post. After looking all around and finding no one, I walked by the Smith Street side of the park. I saw this man and I decided to lock him up."

"He was the first one you saw, so you decided to lock him up, is that it?" the judge asked, with an appraising eye on the cowering, trembling David.

"Yes, your honor," the officer replied.

"What was found on the prisoner when you searched him?" the judge asked.

"Only a latchkey," the police officer replied. This time it was meekly, for he had just caught on that the judge perhaps wouldn't hold this "desperado" without a little more evidence.

"Did that key fit the lock of the paint-store?" the judge asked.

"No, it didn't," the officer replied a little sullenly.

"Then I am glad I wasn't the first person you saw after you discovered the burglary," the judge said cuttingly to the officer. Turning to David he said, without asking him a single question: "You are honorably discharged, young man." To the officer, who was about to turn away, the judge said: "You should be ashamed of yourself for displaying such poor judgment in making this arrest. So should your superior officers. Next case."

Too dazed, hurt, and humiliated to go home immediately, David wandered through the streets. He was without money, since he carried no purse on the Sabbath, but he could not have eaten anyway until he had said his prayers. He was even afraid to sit down and rest, for it had been while doing so on the previous night that he had been introduced to tortures. Late in the afternoon, driven by hunger and fatigue, he shuffled in the direction of his home, and there, in his street, neighbors started joyful shouts that the missing youth had been found. The gash on his head, his bedraggled clothes, bespoke only one thing. He had been struck by an automobile and had been treated at a hospital.

With strange cunning David allowed the neighbors to make up their own story. The true facts of his absence, his simple thoughts told him, would destroy the respect of the neighbors for his parents. How could he tell these people that he had been arrested by policemen, had been beaten, had been in a court. He waited for the privacy of the little flat. Even then he was afraid to tell his mother and father. Would they believe in his innocence? He had swallowed only half a cup of tea when he fell on his knees and hiding his head in his mother's lap offered up a prayer and then told of all the circumstances that had befallen him.

There the three wept until sundown, the aged man and woman who had known of pogroms in Russia and Poland in which Jews were beaten without provocation and without right of redress. They wept because a simple faith in a "free America" had been shattered.

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It so happened that Sam, the eldest son, through years of custom, telephoned his parents every Sabbath at sundown to wish them health and good luck for the ensuing week. When he heard the weeping murmurings of arrests and beatings and burglaries he came rushing in a taxicab to the home of his parents. He called a doctor for David and sought to calm his parents. He assured them that no stigma would remain to besmirch David's and their good name. He went to the police station and made inquiries. That the police might have made an honest mistake in arresting his brother on suspicion he was ready to believe and understand, but the brutal beating he could not condone.

The police system functioned perfectly in handling an embarrassing complaint. From one officer to another, from one non-existent name to another, the brother was shunted. After five unsuccessful visits to various police districts, during which his business was neglected and his money expended in cab fares, he decided to write to the authorities and present the circumstances. He felt that if more public-minded citizens would act in making complaints, the possibility of the recurrence of such evils would be reduced to a minimum. He wasn't asking for justice now. He didn't care for redress or punishment of the offending officers. All he wanted now was the return of the finger-prints and photographs. That would remove the stigma, he felt, of criminality. In his letter, which he wrote himself, he explained that he wasn't making a complaint against the police officers. All he wanted was the records.

His request was mailed to the chief of police. But the chief's secretary received the letter. Eight days after Sam mailed the letter, he received a form bearing a rubber-stamp signature, apprising him that his complaint would be investigated and receive prompt attention. Three weeks passed and he heard nothing. So Sam swallowed his pride and told the entire sequence of happenings to some friends who had connections downtown. A personal interview with the secretary to the chief resulted. The secretary was the son of a social registerite, and Sam Goldberg's appearance and diction annoyed him.

In the end it was a police inspector not stemming from the social register who turned over the records without fuss or quibble—a double film showing a prisoner's Rogues' Gallery number pinned across David's chest and one set of finger-prints.

David had to be brought into court to obtain a certified copy of his honorable discharge, which had to be forwarded to the state capital and to Washington, where additional sets of prints had been sent for filing with the Federal Bureau of Investigation Identification Unit.

Besides being entered in the books of the police station, David's name was also entered at the court, at police headquarters, and at the state and federal criminal-identification bureaus. Though he was innocent of all crime, innocent even of evil thoughts, it remains to this day in the records. Should David be unfortunate enough to meet with an accident or perhaps another arrest, newspapers would be informed through their police reporters, who would get their facts from police files, that David Goldberg had been arrested on a certain earlier date charged with burglary, robbery, and resisting arrest.

How about the cops? What about them? Well—what about them?

[*Although the names are fictitious, this is an account of an actual case on file in the records of police headquarters in New York City. It is in all respects faithful to the facts.* —E. H. L.]

The Red Cross Answers the Call

By KINSEY HOWARD

Helena, Montana, November 5

EIGHT hundred and forty-five earthquakes have jarred this historic Montana capital since October 12. The two most severe tremors, on October 18 and 31, left seven dead, scores injured, hundreds suffering from shock, and property damage totaling $4,000,000. There have been twenty-four-hour periods during which the tremors came every ten minutes.

Helena's nerves are in a bad way. One thousand of its homes are destroyed or damaged. At least 30 are ruined; 170 are seriously damaged; 900 more require some repair. Its City Hall is wrecked; some of its churches are ruined; its new million-dollar high school is more than half destroyed, one grade school completely demolished; its courthouse is damaged. Both railroad stations and scores of business houses and apartments have suffered serious losses. Hundreds of the citizens have fled; and others go with each new earth shock.

But the Great Mother, the American Red Cross, has arrived and has the situation in hand.

Even as she extended her healing arms to draw stricken Helena to her breast, the Great Mother voiced a message: it was a call for $30,000 cash, quick. The breast, it seems, was dry. The call, broadcast over Montana, brought response from surrounding cities but very little, naturally enough, from stricken Helena; that city felt, not unreasonably, that the Great Mother, with a "disaster reserve" of $4,000,000 and total assets of nearly $12,000,000, could afford to loosen up, and in a hurry.

E. R. Transue, disaster-relief field worker sent by the Great Mother to Helena, explained that the call was not a demand, only a suggestion that donations would be received. But the call, as sent out under the signature of William M. Baxter, Jr., Midwestern branch manager, read:

> We estimate that it will require approximately $30,000 to assist the affected families in Helena to rehabilitate themselves. The national organization has made an initial contribution toward the relief fund of $5,000. While we do not expect our chapters to use campaign methods in raising funds for the relief of these disaster sufferers, we do confidently expect a substantial contribution from each chapter in Montana.

After the October 31 quake the Great Mother boosted the ante $15,000. Its own contribution still stood at $5,000,

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and up to November 4, Mr. Transue estimated, only about $4,000 of this had been spent or obligated. "The Red Cross," he declared, "will go ahead and do its job regardless of the amount collected; in fact, only about $2,000 has come in in response to the call. I estimate $45,000 will be required and the national organization will make up the difference." He only expected, he admitted, about $10,000 from Montana.

An editorial in the Helena *Independent* on the morning of this interview had served tacit notice on the Great Mother that she need not expect any of the amount asked from Helena itself. Ostensibly commending the Red Cross for calling off its annual membership drive in Helena because of the disaster, the newspaper said:

> While the people of Helena are grateful to the Red Cross for stepping into the crisis at this time . . . after all, that is the business of the Red Cross. It is not necessarily a charity—it is a security and emergency insurance fund which the people of the United States have been building up for a good many years. To this fund Helena has always paid its premium. . . . Now we expect to draw on this fund which we have helped create. It is our right to expect every dollar which is needed for relief from the Red Cross, and we do not need to get down on our knees and beg for these funds, any more than it would be necessary for us to supplicate a fire-insurance company to pay the amount of its policies on business houses in the event they were destroyed by fire.

For a couple of days the Red Cross fed orphans housed in passenger coaches loaned and heated by the railroads. It provided food at a temporary refugee camp set up by the National Guard; and it is sharing, with the Emergency Relief Administration, food costs of a refugee dormitory which supplanted the outdoor camp when zero temperatures set in. Its boast that no one, except through ignorance, went without food or shelter is apparently justified. It was not called upon to assist in evacuation of the destroyed hospital nor in final removal of the orphans to another city. Its expenditures for actual relief, then, have not been large. This Mr. Transue confirms, declaring that probably 80 per cent of the $45,000 Red Cross budget for Helena will go to repairing and rebuilding Helena homes.

If it does, the Great Mother will be setting some kind of a record. Her annual report for the year ending last June 30 asserts that the 1934-35 period was a bad one for disasters: it beat the average by 56 per cent; yet in only one instance was a sum exceeding that budgeted for Helena spent by the Red Cross; this was in the Mississippi-Tennessee floods, when $58,000 was expended for relief of more than 18,000 people. But there's a catch in this one: of the $58,000 total, $52,000 was contributed to the Red Cross for this specific disaster; the national office paid out only $6,000. Tornadoes in Amite County, Mississippi, killed a score and destroyed or badly damaged 456 homes; the Red Cross spent $39,236 for relief, but it took in $4,000 in contributions.

The Great Mother, listing disaster-relief expenditures in her annual report, lumps together the sum she herself spends and whatever she is able to dig out of the pockets of the stricken city or its neighbors. Thus the tabulation of disaster expenditures shows $23,231 for Nome after fire destroyed much of the city; but the summary of receipts elsewhere in the report discloses contributions which reduced the national organization's share in this disaster to $16,673.

Total disaster relief, domestic, insular, and foreign, for this 56-per-cent-worse-than-average year was $630,395; but total disaster-relief contributions were $288,095, leaving an actual disaster expenditure by the national organization of $342,300. Oddly enough this is almost exactly $10,000 more than another item, listed as "general executive offices, accounting, War Department audit, area managers and assistants," which comes to $332,331! Another costly item was "general chapter service," which cost $528,591, or $186,000 more than disaster relief. Chapter service included $125,410 for correspondence.

It is impossible to obtain from the Red Cross representative a flat statement giving the organization's standard of relief. The only measure of Red Cross help, Mr. Transue declares, is need. As disaster-relief field worker, he, apparently, is judge of that need. He wishes to administer the funds in his control to the best advantage of the most people; commendably, he guards against graft and chiseling in rebuilding operations. But this view of his duty and the view of the newspaper already quoted—a view shared by many Americans, that they have paid their dollar and in return expect protection—inevitably must conflict. To the Red Cross field worker the organization does serve primarily as a charity, not as an insurance, and it is as a charitable appeal that the call immediately goes out for more funds, goes out to citizens who have been paying annual memberships faithfully for decades under the impression that they were supporting continuous "disaster relief." And it is as a charity that the Red Cross finally functions: in other words, from the bottom up.

Suspicion arises, after a critical analysis of the Great Mother's annual report, that next year's lists may show expenditures in Helena to have been considerably less than the $45,000 now budgeted with great fanfare of publicity. The earthquakes—Helena hopes—will be only a disturbing memory by then, and few Helena folks will read the voluminous printed summary. It will be interesting to learn what the final figure will be and how much of it will have been contributed by the Great Mother out of her healthy "disaster reserve."

Correspondence

Buyers, Combine!

To the Editors of The Nation:

"Buyers, Beware!" says your editorial in your issue of November 6. And elsewhere in the same issue of *The Nation* you embark upon the work of educating American consumers on how to protect themselves from the wolves in sheeps' garments.

We have had similar attempts in the past. With what results? Consumers' Research has thus far reached a mere 50,000 consumers in a country of about 130,000,000. What you are really trying to do is to educate every consumer in the land to become an expert buyer of shoes, clothing, tooth paste, underwear, hats, foods, cosmetics, services, and so forth. Having been a buyer of one product myself, I can assure you that you could no more succeed in this noble endeavor than you could make humanitarians out of the makers of ammunition.

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Why not tackle the problem at the source? The average consumer, with the possible exception of the leisure-ridden ladies and gentlemen of the capitalistic class, is too much pre-occupied with his or her problems of daily existence to imbibe all the information about the products to be purchased. It requires great knowledge and experience to be a good buyer. You cannot expect the average person to consult an encyclopedia every time he wants to buy something. The only way out of this dilemma is consumers' cooperation. Organized consumer buying power alone can do what you so eagerly want to do through "educating" the public to know what it is buying or what it should buy. The average consumer should be able to walk into a store with the same sense of security as to quality and price as when he goes to take dinner at his mother's table. Such confidence the consumer can have only when he goes to a store which he owns and controls, where the buying is done for him and done by experts.

Here is your opportunity. Do not wait until the country is aflame with the message of the cooperative movement to join the chorus. This is the time for you to give space and time to help spread the consumers' cooperative message.

New York, November 3 J. A. DE BREST

In Defense of Fairness

TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATION:

I am wholly ignorant regarding the economics of milk distribution, but in common with thousands I know a great deal about Mr. Charles C. Burlingham's devotion to the public good. Indeed, if an old New Yorker may venture an opinion, it would be difficult to name a citizen of New York more consistently devoted to the public good than Mr. Burlingham. Which doesn't at all mean that all Mr. Burlingham's notions for effectuating the public good are ultimate wisdom, as he would be the very first to admit. But it surely does mean that when one has given a long life of generous devotion to the commonweal, disagreement with Mr. Burlingham's views regarding the hygienic dangers of loose milk, or the constitutional validity of differential minimum prices between advertised and non-advertised brands of milk, ought not to be explained by calling into question Mr. Burlingham's motives. Messrs. Chase and Goldsmith, in their article in *The Nation* for October 30, ought to conceive it possible that Mr. Burlingham may not see the light as they see it without attributing his darkness to his distorting friendship with a former president of the Borden Company. That kind of self-righteousness and unfairness toward an honored citizen is too easy.

Cambridge, Mass., November 8 FELIX FRANKFURTER

Contributors to This Issue

DORTHY DETZER is secretary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

EMANUEL H. LAVINE is a reporter on a New York morning paper. His article is a chapter from a book he is writing, to be called "Cheese It—the Cops!"

WILLIAM TROY is a member of the staff of Bennington College.

LUDWIG LORE, formerly the editor of the New York *Volkszeitung*, conducts a column, "Behind the Cables," in the New York *Post*.

MARYA ZATURENSKA is the author of a book of verse, "Threshold and Hearth."

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- What problems face young couples who delay marriage for economic reasons?
- Is the proportion of illegitimate births increasing despite wider-spread knowledge of contraception?
- Is homosexuality common among unmarried women?
- Is a marriage in which there has been pre-marriage sexual intercourse more likely or is it less likely to go to smash?
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Labor and Industry

"We Told Washington"

The Cotton Pickers Visit the Government

By THOMAS BURKE

OUR delegation went to Washington to protest against the brutal murder of at least six people during the cotton pickers' strike in Alabama, the beating of scores of others, and the complete violation of many constitutional rights. There were Mrs. Annie Mae Meriwether, wife of a murdered Negro strike leader; Wesley Smith of Calhoun and Henry Roberts of Fort Deposit, Negro strike leaders driven from Lowndes County; Joseph S. Gelders, recently an assistant professor of physics at the University of Alabama; Donald Henderson, editor of the *Rural Worker;* and myself. We didn't like Washington. Here was the one place where we should have been treated with courtesy and allowed the freedom Jefferson had in mind when he added the Bill of Rights to the Constitution. Instead, we were shadowed by G-men, forced to eat in Jim Crow restaurants, forced to find sleeping quarters in private homes to avoid Jim Crow practices, and leered at by well-fed, well-dressed white people as we climbed in and out of taxicabs together.

President Roosevelt had just returned from his fishing trip, so we went to call on him. Police eyed us sternly in the reception room of the White House. Newspaper reporters swarmed out of a press conference. We asked for an interview with the President. We were told we could see his secretary, Mr. McIntyre. Finally we saw Mr. McIntyre's secretary. We told him about the terrible living conditions in the Black Belt of Alabama, about wages of $1 to $3 a week for 70 or more hours of work and wages of 35 cents per 100 pounds for picking cotton; we told how the Share-Croppers' Union had called the strike of the cotton pickers to win $1 per 100 pounds for picking cotton and $1 a day for wage hands.

Then we told him about High Sheriff R. E. Woodruff of Lowndes County shooting four times at Willie Witcher, Negro strike leader in Calhoun, beating him over the head with a pistol, and throwing him into jail for twenty-seven days. That was on August 19. We explained how a lynch mob organized by Sheriff Woodruff had carried six strike leaders out of their beds that night and beaten them almost to death in the swamps. We told how, a few days later, Smith Watkins, a Negro leader of the union, was caught by the mob, his stomach ripped open with knives, his body riddled with bullets and thrown into the swamps near Fort Deposit. Also we told him how Jim Press Meriwether, a Negro striker, had walked into his sister's home with a sack of flour and had been shot down by John Frank Bates of Fort Deposit, one of a gang of lynchers who had taken over the house; and how this lynch mob had carried the dying man to C. C. Ryles's plantation to question him as he lay in the hot sun for more than six hours, then hung him to a limb and riddled his body with about a hundred bullets. Mrs. Meriwether told how part of the same mob came to the place where she was staying, and how Vaughn Ryles and Ralph McGuire stripped her naked and whipped her with a rope until her legs were cut and bleeding, and how they hung her to the rafters until she was unconscious—later they drove her away from the place. We told him that on Labor Day a mob headed by Deputy Sheriff Ed Arant of Fort Deposit raided the home of Ed Bracy, county leader of the union, and shot him nineteen times in the neck and head as he tried to escape through the back door. We also told him about the three unidentified, bullet-riddled bodies of Negro strikers found in the swamps around Fort Deposit and Calhoun—and that no inquest was held to identify the bodies. All of this, we told him, had happened merely because the workers used their constitutional right to strike.

The official smile on the President's secretary's secretary's face faded as we proceeded with the story. We told him that Governor Graves had sent Kyle Young, former High Sheriff of Talapoosa County and leader of the lynch mob against the share-croppers in Camp Hill in 1931, to investigate the strike with bloodhounds from Prison Camp No. 4, and that the investigation ended with the running down of strike leaders in the swamps.

Our mass of facts proved beyond doubt that if justice was to be done, if the Constitution of the United States was to be upheld, the federal government would have to step in and do the job. We listened to some talk about states' rights; we heard reasons why the federal government could not meddle with private affairs in a state. But all the while we were insisting that people's lives and violations of the federal Constitution were the responsibility of the federal government, we were remembering something: the former Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan, Governor Graves, is a faithful "New Dealer"; there will be an election in 1936; the President will need every vote he can get to be reelected; and the masses of Negroes and poor whites do not vote in Alabama. The states' rights alibi droned in our ears as we were escorted away. The man who had been elected because he had promised to remember the "forgotten man" refused even to recognize us.

After that we went to see Postmaster General Farley. We saw his secretary, a pompous little whipper-snapper who became very indignant because we assumed we had certain post-office rights. His lips trembled with rage as we insisted on presenting our case. We were about to remind him that our taxes helped to pay his salary, that he is paid to serve the public, not to run us out of our own building. He cooled down and sent us to see an investigator. We told the very impatient investigator about George Hall, the Calhoun postmaster, who took part in lynchings and who opened mail addressed to farm hands and share-croppers, using the information in the letters to identify and terrorize union members. Even letters from the FERA in Washington were opened or not delivered. We told him the Fort Deposit postmaster was doing the same thing. We told how George Hall forced a Negro boy to burn a bundle of copies of the *Daily*

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Worker, which has second-class mailing rights, at the door of the Calhoun post office after Hall had opened the bundle. Then we told him that the Montgomery postmaster had refused to accept the rent for P. O. Box 322 unless Albert Jackson, secretary of the Share-Croppers' Union, appeared in person to pay it. Albert Jackson was being hunted by the lynchers in both Lowndes and Montgomery counties, and we said it looked as if the postmaster were cooperating with the lynchers in the man-hunt to find the leader of the strike and the Share-Croppers' Union.

Our public official told us we were making a pretty broad statement, asked us to put it all in writing, clicked on the official smile signaling the end of the interview, and rushed off. We remembered as we left that Mr. Farley is the chairman of the National Committee of the Democratic Party and that he feels just the way Roosevelt does about the coming elections.

At the Rural Resettlement Administration offices we could not see Mr. Tugwell, but we saw one of his assistants. He was very sympathetic and listened to our whole story. We told him how Superintendent Jenning in Chambers County had evicted two "steer"-farm families (they are called "steer" farms because the work animals are steers) when they had refused to scab on the cotton pickers' strike. We told him that the farm foremen had tried to force steer-farm families in Talapoosa County to scab on the strike but that the farmers had refused.

Then we told of the $7 monthly food advances for a family of fourteen on steer farms, of farm foremen collecting all the peas and most of the corn the farmers raised for the government debt, of taking the first bale of cotton for rent, of farm foremen holding the steer farmers' gin certificates and refusing to allow them to sell their own cotton. We quoted the Alabama Rehabilitation Administration's report, which states that these families had been placed on "Alabama's poorest soil." We told him that some steer farmers had said they would rather be in the federal penitentiary than see their families starving to death on these slave farms. We pointed out that the local administrators of Rural Resettlement were landlords who keep the steer farmers beaten down in even worse slavery than exists on the plantations.

Our friendly official agreed with us that something had to be done; he explained the purpose of Rural Resettlement; but it became clear that the government was pouring millions of dollars into a bottomless hole. We left with the feeling that this person would honestly like to do something about it but that he didn't have the power.

At the FERA Mr. Hopkins was not in, so we saw Mr. Dort, director of the Division of Investigation of the FERA. Here again we found sympathetic ears for our story. We told how Thad Holt, Alabama Relief Administrator, had issued a statement before the strike saying, "Cotton pickers must pick cotton or else—" and how relief workers in Montgomery had been transported to the plantations in government trucks and paid 50 cents per hundred by the landlords for picking cotton, while continuing to receive their relief orders from the government. We told him how landlords like N. J. Bell at Calhoun had refused to let his wage hands get relief in spite of the fact that they are starving. We told him about the misery and hunger that exist in the rural regions and how people are being denied relief.

Mr. Dort promised an investigation if we would present more detailed facts—though the investigation would have to be indorsed by "higher-ups." We remembered the Mary Connor Meyers report on Arkansas. We remembered that it was suppressed, and that Mrs. Meyers no longer works for the Administration.

Chester Davis, AAA administrator, heard our story too. Joseph Gelders and Mrs. Meriwether told how the landlord-controlled committees of the local AAA discriminate against the croppers and tenants, how landlords sign the AAA contract for all their croppers and tenants and then keep the gin certificates, land-rent checks, and parity premiums that are due the croppers and tenants. Only in sections of the Black Belt where the Share-Croppers' Union is strong do the croppers and tenants get gin certificates, and Talapoosa County is the only place where they get land-rent checks. And this was the result of bitter struggles led by the union. Chester Davis promised investigations too.

None of them really wanted to investigate. It was clear to them that these violations had taken place. All the New Deal agencies admitted that letters were always coming in protesting against these very things. Yet they told us we had to present more detailed facts before they would investigate. We realized that we would have to bring tremendous pressure upon the Administration to get an investigation. We will get the facts, but it is a mighty hard job in the illegal conditions under which the union is forced to work, and the facts can only be exposed where the union is strong enough to protect its members.

It also became clear that the FERA, the RRA, the AAA, and similar New Deal agencies were receiving the brunt of the workers' and farmers' anger against the whole Administration. They act as a buffer. It is in these agencies that the New Deal liberals are placed, people who listen sympathetically to the stories of hunger and terror, but whose hands are tied, who have to answer to the "big stick" in the White House. We tried to get definite statements from them but received only evasive replies. These New Dealers always remembered "instructions," dismissals, suppressed reports, and all the other scandals of the New Deal. Behind the liberal front were the bitter reactionary wielders of the "big stick" ready to suppress anything that might really be helpful to the "forgotten man."

We told our story to Washington—the whole horrible story of murder, terror, and suppression directed against a strike called to win $1 a day for farm workers. And at each office we left a parting challenge. We said we would get the "detailed" facts; but we said also that we were going back to organize stronger than ever; that through the organized strength of the workers and poor farmers, white and Negro, we ourselves would put a stop to murders, terror, extra-legal violence, and complete violation of civil and constitutional rights. We reminded the officials that where the union is strong, the landlords do not dare to terrorize the people. If the federal government refuses to protect the lives of its citizens, if it allows small groups of despots to rip the Constitution to shreds and fling it in the faces of their victims, then we, red-blooded Americans who are being crushed in the vise of landlord oppression, will take it in our own hands to win the "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" for which our forefathers laid down their lives in the American Revolution.

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Letter to a Clergyman

By HEYWOOD BROUN

THE REVEREND ERNEST J. MARVIN,
Pastor of Lawrence Methodist Church:

DEAR SIR: I note that today you did the selecting of a text for the editorial page of Mr. Hearst's New York *American*. Your name was printed prominently under your somewhat tactless suggestion of the fourteenth verse of the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It runs as you may remember, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What a thing to be suggesting to Mr. Hearst! Indeed, you might have gone ahead and shot the next verse right back at him. You know it: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

I hate to bring up any root of bitterness myself, Mr. Marvin, but aren't you somewhat ashamed of yourself for having lent your name, the prestige of your church, not forgetting the authority of the Bible, to the mean task of garnishing a Hearst editorial page. I know you'll answer that you didn't stop to think. That's not good enough.

Perhaps you may reply that after all a lot of the other boys are doing the same thing. You may attempt to remind me that the Reverend R. A. D. Beaty of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Manhattan, was in the paper just one day ahead of you, and that the text for tomorrow is to be picked by the Reverend Israel Goldfarb, rabbi of Beth Israel Anshe Ameth, Brooklyn. That is not a moving argument. As far as I'm concerned, I say a plague on all the houses of worship which permit their pastors to uphold the hands of William Randolph Hearst for the sake of a little cheap publicity.

I am assuming that there is no other reward than the privilege of seeing your name in print next to the reading matter from the Good Book and the daily cartoon. There are those who seem to feel that no betrayal has been committed if only no silver pieces have changed hands. The crime of Judas did not lie in the fact that "they were glad and covenanted to give him money." You'll find that story of the deal between the apostle and "the chief priests and captains" in the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. As a matter of fact, I had a text all picked out for you in the very next chapter of the same Gospel. It seemed to me that you might be moved to preach a repentant sermon to atone for the slight service which you rendered to the high priest of the money changers. On second thought I have decided to withhold the text at this time and use it in a more auspicious place, for what I started to set down was Luke XXIII, 2: "We found this fellow perverting the nation." Under the circumstances it would hardly do.

I hope you will pardon the length of this letter, my dear Mr. Marvin, but I really am curious to know what animates a clergyman when he lends his name to the adornment of a Hearst editorial page. It can hardly be that these local gentlemen of the cloth actually approve of the policies of the *Mirror*, the *American*, and the *Journal*. And yet they stumble in with their little scriptural garlands in honor of the Sage of San Simeon. Can it be that the hearts of you gentlemen bleed for poor Mr. Hearst turned out of his palace in a driving snow storm by the income-tax law of California? You, for instance, Pastor Ernest, if I may grow that familiar, nominate for the top of the New York *American* editorial page the phrase, "Follow peace with all men." Did you suggest it seriously or in a spirit of mockery? Have you ever followed the editorial page in question and noted its constant emphasis upon fascist philosophy? Certainly the path of peace does not lie in that direction.

And there was also the matter of "holiness." The text you suggested goes on to say, "without which no man shall see the Lord." Is it your notion that Mr. Hearst's campaign against labor and his effort to drive all workers into a deeper serfdom is really a holy war? In recent years William Randolph Hearst has dropped the mask and preached day after day the theory that a government's first and only duty is to protect the holders of vast fortunes so that they may accumulate a little more. Do you honestly think, Mr. Marvin, that Mr. Hearst's passionate concern for his millions is in accord with the teachings of the Savior to whose service you are dedicated?

There are men and even political parties in the land today who preach the spirit of a cooperative community such as Jesus outlined to his followers. These men are branded in the Hearst press as agitators and reds. Anybody who raises his voice for human rights against the dead weight of property rights is assailed by William Randolph Hearst. If the old man of San Simeon can be imagined as having lived many centuries ago, you know as well as I do what his reaction would have been when he heard the report of the advice given to a certain rich young man. The Hearst press of Jerusalem would have denounced that Teacher. It would have called upon Pontius Pilate to imprison first and then deport the outside agitator from Galilee.

And if you can still hold the fantasy of Hearst in the Holy Land, imagine the broadside he would "suggest" to his editors upon hearing that a young zealot had dared to scourge the money changers out of the temple. Hearst is Hearst, and even in that day the incident would have been followed by an editorial calling upon the Supreme Court and the shade of Thomas Jefferson to protect the business man against subversive propaganda. Indeed, I almost seem to see the headline, "Alien Red Soaks the Thrifty."

Well, that's all I have to say, Mr. Marvin, and I must close now. I wish you and your fellow-clergymen would really give serious consideration to the question of whether the Hearst pulpit is a fitting place for anyone who believes in the Brotherhood of Man.

In an Early Issue

How to Control Munitions

H. C. Engelbrecht

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Facts for Consumers

SMITH BROTHERS, Inc., now almost as famous for their radio program featuring Trade and Mark as for their cough syrup and cough drops, and the Carleton and Hovey Company, distributors of Father John's Medicine, have recently entered into stipulations with the Federal Trade Commission which will oblige them to modify the claims made for these highly profitable cold remedies. Father John's will no longer be represented as an effective therapeutic remedy for colds, coughs, or throat troubles, but as a "treatment" for these common disorders, effective "by providing the beneficial effects of Vitamin A." Smith Brothers has agreed to discontinue advertising that its products are effective remedies for colds, or that either preparation has a unique advantage over other remedies owing to Vitamin A content. These apparently conflicting orders on claims which may be made for the efficacy of Vitamin A leave the decisions up to the consumer. According to Dr. Alphonse R. Dochez of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, considered America's leading student of the cold, proof is still lacking that the incidence of colds can be diminished by the administration of excessive amounts of certain vitamins.

In a paper which Dr. Dochez recently read before the New York Academy of Medicine he manifested a similar lack of enthusiasm about the effectiveness of ultra-violet light treatments. The rational treatment of the common cold, according to Dochez, and the one which he prescribes for himself, is a forty-eight-hour rest in bed; relief of inflammatory swelling of the mucous membranes is "best accomplished by bland irrigations and sprays. The belief that the respiratory mucous membranes can be rendered sterile by the use of local antisepsis is erroneous." A salt-water solution is the most obvious of the bland substances and steam inhalations are an effective method of clearing the head. Still the public continues to spend millions of dollars every year for over-advertised cures for the common cold, thereby maintaining the owners of these proprietories in opulence.

The most recent seizures of cold cures by the Food and Drug Administration include Granny's Cough Syrup and Bostwick's White Pine Cough Syrup, for fraudulent therapeutic claims and failure to declare the percentage of chloroform. The Federal Trade Commission has acted against Tarpinod, "guaranteed to break up a cold in twenty-four hours or to stop a cough"; MacMillin's Formula, held to be "without therapeutic value in the conditions mentioned in the advertising"; Broncotone, held an ineffective treatment for respiratory disturbances ranging from asthma to colds; and the Calafo Company's Liquid, Mentholated Asthmatic Powder, and Mentholated Inhallettes.

* * *

RECENT advertising of Kruschen Salts in the trade press is another example of the impudence of manufacturers of proprietories and of the incomplete protection afforded the public by the existent food-and-drug legislation and procedure. Six months ago the United States Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Federal Trade Commission's cease-and-desist order against this product, prohibiting representations that Kruschen Salts are a cure or remedy for obesity, or that they will of themselves reduce excess fat. In *Drug Topics* for November 11 E. Griffiths Hughes, Inc., the distributor, announced that "Kruschen advertising never stops and Kruschen does what it says it will do," thereby achieving a nice equivocation and a direct slap at the Federal Trade Commission and its cease-and-desist order.

ORDINARILY the reports of Better Business Bureaus are models of restraint but in its campaign to clean up the local bedding industry, the Chicago bureau has broken with tradition to the extent of using "scare" copy to warn the public of the dangers in second-hand bedding. "What's in mattresses and upholstery filled with 'used material'?" it asks. "Almost anything—but mostly shredded particles of old perspiration-stained mattresses, discarded bandages, dirt, and germs." The Chicago clean-up was inspired by the NRA bedding code, which forbids the use of any second-hand material, an improvement over many state laws which permit "new" bedding to be made of old material, when it is so labeled. The Code Authority did not claim any great success in the enforcement of its provision, but the Chicago bureau is now carrying on the work.

The list of manufacturers whose products are blacklisted is too long to print here, but can be obtained from the Chicago Better Business Bureau.* It includes Rhein Brothers, who made mattresses for babies' cribs of second-hand shoddy, and the Lincoln Bedding Company, which manufactured 200 mattresses of old material and sold them for new to the Cook County Hospital. Firms which are cooperating with the bureau now attach to their products a "sanitary guaranty" specifying that the bedding has been manufactured in a factory inspected by the Chicago Better Business Bureau. No data are available as to the strictness of the inspection.

The Englander Spring Bed Company, Incorporated, one of the largest in the industry, has been served by the Federal Trade Commission with a show-cause order charging it with unfair competition through use of "false, fictitious, and inflated price marks." The Chicago Better Business Bureau has ruled that manufacturers should not label a mattress at a price greater than 125 per cent above cost. Such labels, it points out, "serve as a false basis of comparison to the customer."

* * *

AN article on gasoline appearing in the current issue of the *Consumer,* the new publication of the NRA Consumers' Division (free to anyone who requests it), is interesting if only because of admissions in a government publication of certain practices in the industry which heretofore have been known to a comparatively small sector of the buying public. Thus we are informed that for ordinary automobile engines the use of the special high octane (ethyl) gasoline for which a two-cent premium is charged is a waste of money. "This predicament is now being recognized by the automobile companies, which are attempting to remedy the situation without cost to the gasoline companies," says the *Consumer.* The Chrysler Company is mentioned as working on an engine amenable to any octane gas. The practice of the major companies of swapping gasoline in order to save transportation costs, and of depending on independent producers for part of their supply is cited, and consumers are warned to be "wary of paying any significant differential in price because the pump has a familiar trademark blazoned conspicuously on it." Here, probably for the first time, the government is actually warning the consumer against blind faith in advertised trade names.

Manufacturers of two products, Graf-Ex and Miracle Gas Compound, both represented as increasing gasoline mileage, have entered into stipulations with the Federal Trade Commission to discontinue assertions that their products will make one gallon of gasoline do the work of two. The Coffield Protector Company, maker of Graf-Ex, will also discontinue claims that by the use of its product oil consumption can be cut down three-quarters.

RUTH BRINDZE

[*Miss Brindze's page of Facts for Consumers appears in* The Nation *every other week.*]

* A list of cooperating manufacturers and retailers can also be secured by writing to the bureau at 111 West Washington Street, Chicago. This information is valuable, since many of the manufacturers have national distribution of their products.

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Books, Films, Drama

Our Critics, Right or Wrong. IV

The Proletarians

By MARGARET MARSHALL and MARY McCARTHY

THE Marxist critic, as he appears in the pages of the *New Masses,* is an extremely complicated animal. Though he has cut himself off from the bourgeois critics, a number of vestigial traces of the bourgeois intellectual life still cling to him. For example, in organizing his own Book Union he has paralleled the activities and methods of the Literary Guild and the Book of the Month Club. Moreover, he has not abjured the literary back-scratching which goes on in high-powered capitalist literary circles. A somewhat sordid series of incidents which recently stained the fair face of the *New Masses* indicates quite clearly that personal friendship can still play a part in the literary judgments of the proletarian critic. When "Redder than the Rose," by Robert Forsythe, made its appearance in book form, it happened to be reviewed in the *New Masses* by Robert Briffault, a close friend of Kyle Crichton, who, as virtually everyone at that time knew, is none other than Robert Forsythe. After about two pages of praise for the "rollicking humor" of the essays, Mr. Briffault began to speculate, a little coyly perhaps, on the identity of the author.

> Robert Forsythe [he guesses] is, almost certainly, a young man. He is probably fresh from Harvard—I deduce this from his detestation of Boston and his scholarly contempt for institutions of higher learning. (Moreover, Forsythe is wealthy. One has to enjoy large private means from well-invested capital to be a Communist writer . . .) I picture Forsythe from the dainty deftness of his trip on the light fantastic toe of humor, as a slim, maybe a trifle scrawny and undersized, slip of a lad with angel-blue eyes and a shock of golden curls.

When, a few months later, Briffault's "Europa" came out, it was reviewed rather unfavorably in the *New Masses* by Granville Hicks, who spoke of "the banality of the dialogue and the general lack of stylistic distinction," and who used a generalization of Forsythe's to prove that "Europa" should never have been a novel at all. Mr. Hicks probably lived to regret this slip of his critical tongue, for it was Robert Forsythe to the rescue, with sneers for the unwary Mr. Hicks and extravagant plaudits for his crony and admirer, Mr. Briffault. This friendly exchange of compliments was only exceeded by the shower of approval which the Janus-faced Mr. Crichton, in his book column in capitalist *Life,* bestowed on Mr. Forsythe's book.

The Forsythe-Crichton-Briffault love feast and its few counterparts in the history of the *New Masses* are merely superficial evidence of the hangover of bourgeois literary habits in proletarian criticism. In a much deeper sense the average Marxist critic is distressed by the shackles of bourgeois aestheticism which, no matter how he chafes against them, still hold him fast. The obligations of the *Herald Tribune* reviewer are simple: he is customarily expected to write, in fair English, more or less favorable reviews of the books presented to him. For the *Saturday Review* scribe life is not much more difficult: he must write in good English his own opinion of the book set before him, and that opinion must conform, roughly, to the general conceptions of literature held by the editors of the magazine. The *New Masses* critic need not worry about his English, but his problem is polygonal.

He must, in the first place, applaud any proletarian novel, no matter how inept, on political grounds. If his old-fashioned aestheticism intrudes on his political theory, his conscience obliges him to whisper a word of blame amid a hundred of praise. Thus we see Granville Hicks writing a fumbling finale to a loving review of a class-conscious effort called "Parched Earth."

> There is no doubt that the book has faults, but they are of minor importance in a first novel that treats so complicated a series of incidents with so much clarity and force . . . that shows so profound and truly Marxian an insight into the action of social forces and their effect on individual lives.

And Oakley Johnson is troubled about "Just Plain Larnin'," vaguely dissatisfied with it on aesthetic grounds, yet struggling to convince himself that its weaknesses are political.

> It is a good story, with living characters; its faults are minor [he does not list them] and, after all, possible of correction. Put it beside Grace Lumpkin's "To Make My Bread": the difference of subject matter makes the comparison all the more instructive. "To Make My Bread" is . . . the better book perhaps because Grace Lumpkin wrote with the Communist Manifesto at her elbow, whereas Mr. Shields may (I am guessing) have had George S. Counts's "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" too close to his.

As a corollary to the principle of praising the proletarian, the Marxist critic must, willy-nilly, berate the bourgeois. It is usually easy enough to damn a bad bourgeois work of art, and the left-wing critics have done good work in pigeonholing Dorothy Parker, Thornton Wilder, Robert Nathan, and Ludwig Lewisohn, among others. It is harder to down a relatively good bourgeois. Sally Greene can do her best to dispose of Aldous Huxley's "Point Counter Point" in eighteen somewhat ungrammatical lines, but she shoots quite wide of her mark.

> The characters, although by no means intentional on the part of the author, are heavy indictments against the society which breeds and nurtures them.

Kenneth Fearing is foolish enough to deprecate "The Magic Mountain" with a couple of casual clauses in a review regretting that "Death of a Young Man," by W. L. Rivers, did not get the attention it deserved "in a season when the cultural brotherhood was wringing its hands over 'The Grandmothers,' 'A Good Woman,' 'Magic Mountain,' etc., etc., each of these masterpieces being 'greater and more

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poignant' than its fellows." But Michael Gold's aesthetic sensibilities force him to admit of Thomas Hardy: "One ought not to criticize an honorable old genius," even though his lack of information leads him to go on to a sneer at the "eighty comfortable years" of Hardy's life. Henry Flury has not the heart to condemn Proust altogether, so he describes "Swann's Way" as "a good antidote for *Snappy Stories, True Confessions,* and all the other McFadden string. This translation from the French deals adequately with the psychology of a great emotion." Hicks is numbed by Proust's artistry, but his political conscience stings him into a measure of disapproval, and he writes of "Remembrance of Things Past":

> We never see how the aristocracy is linked to French industry and finance by marriages and investments. Though the aesthetes will howl at the suggestion, I believe that "The Remembrance of Things Past" would be a greater work if Proust had followed the Guermantes out of the salons and bedrooms into the fields and factories that support them.

This curious internal warfare between Marx and aestheticism, which gives to left-wing reviews of bad proletarian and good bourgeois books such a hybrid, muddy quality, is not the only cross that the *New Masses* critic has to bear. He must also hew to the party line, accommodating himself swiftly and dextrously to its every shift. If Trotzky is tossed out of the party, a Trotzkyist novel, whatever its merits, is automatically taboo; and if the United Front is ushered in by Dimitrov, the palest liberal novelist must be welcomed into the fold. Thus in 1934 "Man's Fate," a real revolutionary novel, was slighted because it accepted Trotzky's view of the Chinese Revolution, and in 1935 Robert Rylee's humanitarian "Deep Dark River" is reviewed with enthusiasm and few reservations under the misleading heading, "Another Southern Novelist Falls in Line." In the same way, only a change in Moscow's complexion can account for the fact that Carl Van Doren, last year called "fascist" by the *New Masses,* is today an adviser of the Book Union. Just a little while ago Louis Adamic also was denounced as a fascist by William Z. Foster, but now Dale Curran defends him from Isabel Paterson's attacks.

The problems of the *New Masses* reviewer do not end here. He is placed in an equivocal position by the very nature of the magazine for which he writes. The *New Masses* subscribers seem for the most part to be intellectuals, many of them renegades from the middle class. At the same time, it is also read by a number of more or less untutored members of the working class, and its position as a virtual Communist Party organ demands that it cater to the interests of the proletariat. So there arises a great confusion. If a *New Masses* critic writes an esoteric, abstruse review, the editors are often bombarded with comical, perfectly sincere letters from workers, asking in effect, "What the hell? Who cares? Give us red meat!" But red meat is too simple for the intellectuals' taste; they quickly grow bored, and their subscriptions are allowed to expire. Now the *New Masses,* having for years veered wildly from one course to the other, has settled down to a rather unsatisfactory compromise. It has recognized the preponderance of intellectuals among its subscribers, and to them it is now serving what it considers a brand-new dish called "Content and Form in Proletarian Literature." "The question of content and form," announces Isidor Schneider, "has again become a literary issue. Proletarian writing has arrived at such a degree of maturity that it can afford to raise the question for itself." Heralding a new era in which the imagery and symbols in left-wing writing will be the subjects of critical scrutiny, Stanley Burnshaw apologizes for the past.

> During the past year . . . there has been a narrowing tendency in book reviews, critical studies, and literary articles purporting to embody the Marxist point of view. We have been so much concerned with *what* the author is saying that we have neglected the concomitant question: how does he say it?

John Yost, too, has seen the light, and thus apostrophizes his fellow-critics: "Let us not be guilty of an infantile literary leftist snobbery." It must not be thought, however, that this change in the *New Masses'* literary policy has in any way released the pent-up traditional aestheticism within the Marxist critic. Questions of content and form can be taken up only within the framework of Marxian dialectics: faults of style or construction are still "minor" faults. The left-wing critic has remained true to his teachers. Though he dallies with the intellectuals, it is a chaste political dalliance, and he has not altogether forgotten Lenin's admonition, which was quoted in the *New Masses* review of Clara Zetkin's "Reminiscences of Lenin":

> It is the masses who must be considered. We must not frighten them either by "left" stupidities or by "right" timidities. . . . Think always of the masses, Clara, and you will come to the revolution as we came to it: with the masses, through the masses.

In accordance with this suggestion the strange new dish which the intellectuals are devouring has been salted to the worker's taste. The Marxist critic, already self-conscious, has been obliged to deal with abstract problems in oversimplified sentences, to mix "plebeian" with "fancy" words and melodramatic name-calling with scholarly analysis, and, finally, to dot his most intellectual discourse with "goddamns," "hells," and "stinkings." This affectedly sweaty style may make the going easier for the proletarian, though he may, on the other hand, consider that he is being patronized; at any rate, it gives the intellectual the feeling that he is right in the midst of the class struggle.

As a sideline to this traffic with the intellectuals, the Marxist critic is also required to run a kind of correspondence school for proletarian novelists. He must write not only for himself, for the party, and for his organ's subscribers; he must also write for the authors whose books he reviews, and the proletarian novelists are an easily dissatisfied, captious lot. Over a year ago the *New Masses* ran a symposium of replies from fourteen authors whose books had been reviewed in the magazine, and to whom the editors had written asking whether the criticism of their work in the *New Masses* had helped them, and also what they expected from Marxist criticism. Apparently, they expected a good deal, since thirteen of the fourteen replies were, on the whole, unfavorable. The *New Masses* appears to have been discouraged by the result of its survey, for this, in part, was its editorial comment:

> We believe that these letters will interest readers of the magazine, and we trust that they will prove of value to its reviewers. . . . We are glad that we decided to give the authors their day in court, but we are not convinced

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that they have said the final word. . . . Moreover, as an examination of the letters shows, writers want very different things from critics, and it would be altogether impossible to satisfy them all. There are more and greater problems than some of these writers realize, and they can only be solved if authors and critics work together.

For the Marxist critic there are, indeed, "more and greater problems," problems so urgent and so intricate that the critic has become maladjusted. Subjected to pressure from within and without, the *New Masses* critic has developed a lively inferiority complex. His experience with an older school of criticism, his acquaintance with the great bourgeois writing of past and present, make him aware that there has not yet been any great proletarian writing, that, indeed, a good part of proletarian writing is pretty sad stuff. He tends, therefore, in many cases to overrate the artistry of bourgeois writing. He will condemn a novel on political grounds but speak sadly and often wrongly of the "slickness" of its craftsmanship. Granville Hicks, for instance, while bemoaning Phyllis Bentley's class alignment, considers her "one of the ablest of the younger English writers." Bernard Smith was displeased as a Marxist by "The Closed Garden," by Julian Green, but he felt that it was "a work of genius, surely." To Charles Yale Harrison, Faraday Keene's "Peccadilloes" was "fine writing . . . wasted on . . . trite, sure-fire themes." Though Mike Gold blasted the reputation of Wilder in the *New Republic,* J. Q. Neets wrote of "The Woman of Andros" in the *New Masses:*

> The novel has perfect structure, impeccable delineation of plot and character, subtle nuances of meanings, rhythms, and colors. . . . "The Woman of Andros" is genuine art. . . . Dismissing Wilder's ideology as utterly reactionary, we nevertheless cannot help admiring his superb structure, his economy of means, his chrystaline [sic] style.

It took Josephine Herbst to rebuke him for his gullibility in a letter to the *New Masses* in which she declared: "I seriously doubt the importance of Wilder's style, even considered as style." Yet, in some ways, the inferiority feelings of the left-wing critic have worked to his advantage. He does not dare to indulge in the outlandish comparisons so much favored by the capitalist. In general, he limits himself to a reference to Jack London or Walt Whitman. The following quotations are exceptions to the rule.

> [Of "Orient Express" by John Dos Passos] Not since Matthew Arnold has one so marshaled English words to paint pictures—nor has the turbid ebb and flow of human misery made such sharp erosions in the copperplate of an artist's mind.
>
> Keene Wallis . . . an ex-harvest worker and I. W. W. will take Carl Sandburg's place in five years.—Michael Gold, 1929.

The inferiority feelings of the proletarian critic must rest on personal as well as aesthetic grounds. The revolution needs writers, propagandists, prophets. The left-wing critic must, therefore, act as a missionary for the revolutionary movement. He must court young writers of talent, lure them into the proletarian camp. Often, unhappily, he makes mistakes; he does not recognize the true proletarian features of a future comrade. E. Merrill Root, for example, reviewed William Rollins, Jr.'s first book under the title, A Sophisticated Yawn:

> The effect of this book is the same as if one saw a tenth-rate Boston vaudeville troupe giving a burlesque of "Antigone." How long will such cheap, smart, tinsel, dreary stuff as this be the fashion?

"A House on a Street," by Dale Curran, now one of the *New Masses* favorites, was reviewed several months after publication. Henry Roth's "Call It Sleep" was snubbed in an unsigned review until a barrage of indignant letters brought it to the editors' attention. Mike Gold called Albert Halper's "Union Square" ". . . a gold brick . . . not a picture of the Communist movement in New York. . . . It is a picture of the author and his rather shabby-minded friends." Robert Forsythe insulted Hemingway before the *New Masses* obtained the much publicized article, Who Murdered the Vets? from the very author whom its comic muse found so contemptible. The most humorous mistake of all was made by Orrick Johns, who condemned a "Fascist Dialogue" published in the *American Spectator* as "satire at the expense of the workers and destitute," only to receive a note from the author, Harold Preece, informing him that the piece in question was a satire on fascism, to which Mr. Johns could only reply:

> I regret that I did not identify the Harold Preece who published in the *American Spectator* with the same writer who has contributed to the *New Masses*. . . . Had I done so I should have devoted more space to him than a mere running mention—but I did read the story. Our Texan comrade writes well, but I think he made a mistake to submit his sketch to [such a] publication. In such pages Preece's story had an ambiguous ring. . . .

It is well known that Archibald MacLeish was denounced by a *New Masses* critic as a "dirty Nazi," though later in the same periodical V. J. Jerome asserted that the poet's play, "Panic," "justifies us in expecting . . . him, America's most splendid singer, to sing the epic of the proletariat. . . ." Granville Hicks, in 1934, called Sinclair Lewis "a double-crossing apologist for the existing order," though "It Can't Happen Here" was welcomed as a contribution to the fight against fascism. As if to compensate for such errors and oversights, the *New Masses* critic has, in many cases, gone out of his way to attract what later proved to be a political viper to his bosom. James Rorty, Ezra Pound, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Morley Callaghan have all been wooed by the *New Masses,* and later cast aside, often with a "fascist" label.

In his pathetic eagerness to gain converts the *New Masses* critic is unbelievably naive. It seems quite within the range of possibility that if Mark Sullivan were to suggest that he had an interest in the workers, the *New Masses* critic would welcome him, temporarily at least, into the brotherhood. The complexities of politics, economics, aesthetics, magazine sales, and personalities are altogether too much for the *New Masses* critic. His job is too big for him. He is, in consequence, forever backing and filling. If we are to have any sensible Marxist criticism, this critic must be relieved of some of his responsibilities. It may be that the new united front will disembarrass him of a few of his sectarian obligations, and so reendow him with critical and revolutionary dignity.

[*This is the fourth of a series of articles which have appeared every other week in* The Nation. *The fifth will appear in the issue of December 18.*]

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The Critic's Job

The Double Agent. By R. P. Blackmur. Arrow Editions. $2.

THE fundamental defect of most literary criticism in our time is that its object has been too rarely the object which alone would guarantee its autonomy as a special form or mode of intellectual activity—the work of literature. Its object, when it has risen above mere gossip or entertainment, has usually proved to be situated in realms of discourse only remotely or obliquely related to the specific realm of literature—in history, in philosophy, in psychoanalysis, or, as more recently, in political economy. Even such critics as I. A. Richards and Kenneth Burke, who do keep close to the object most of the time, prove upon scrutiny, as Mr. Blackmur points out, to be really talking about linguistics or moral philosophy. Of critics like Dr. Johnson, Walter Pater, and Remy de Gourmont, to mention only more obvious examples of the literary critic *pur sang*, we have suffered a dearth since literature and the other arts were disqualified by all right-minded citizens in the nineties. The T. S. Eliot of "The Sacred Wood" was perhaps the last important critic in English to write about literature as literature and not as something else; and the eclectic nature of his reputation attested to the rarity of his approach. But Mr. Eliot, forsaking literature for theology, has now reduced criticism to a somnolent Sermon on the Devil. Criticism as a whole has become an aerial battleground for competing theologies, including the brand whose leading apologist in this country is Granville Hicks. The literary object, needless to say, has been left far below. And as literary criticism has drifted into the adjacent regions of speculation, it has lost its special role or function, its reason for existence. To put the matter more bluntly, it has lost its utility for those who happen to be most interested in literature when they are talking or reading about literature.

Mr. Blackmur is a young critic who brings to his task, in addition to "enough love and enough knowledge," enough real concentration on the object to make his essays in "craft and elucidation" very useful to the contemporary reader. The most useful items in his collection are precisely those in which the focus is most sharply on the text of the writers under discussion: Notes on E. E. Cummings's Language, Examples of Wallace Stevens, The Method of Marianne Moore, D. H. Lawrence and Expressive Form, and The Masks of Ezra Pound. These are among the best, because among the most securely grounded, studies of these modern writers that will anywhere be found. If Mr. Blackmur has gone to school to Eliot, as is quite obvious from the method, what he has learned has been a method rather than a particular set of judgments. He has applied to certain important American poets of our day the same sort of rigorous textual analysis that Eliot used so successfully on the Elizabethans. And, as in Eliot, distinctions between the imagery used by two poets, between different kinds of imagery used by the same poet, or between the imagery and the intention in a given poem lead usually to some sort of generalized conclusion about a poet or about poetry in general. The usefulness of this fervently concentrated approach will be found in the amount of real light that it throws on the sometimes extremely difficult objects of modern literature, such as the "Cantos" of Ezra Pound or "The Bridge" of Hart Crane.

But the conclusions in the essays mentioned are nearly all safely within the sphere of literary form and style; that is, they do not involve any single and definite intellectual point of view. Technical criticism, like the philosophical, the psychological, and the political varieties, is also only a partial approach to the object. Its value, therefore, is limited. It was inevitable that Mr. Blackmur, again following Eliot, should recognize the desirability of relating his specific analyses to a larger frame of intellectual values. In a final essay the difficulties of such an undertaking are demonstrated in a style that is a reflection of a good deal of earnest confusion. (The trouble is partly that Mr. Blackmur has not yet decided whether Eliot or Henry James is to be the principal influence on his prose.) After reviewing most of the prevalent approaches to literature, Mr. Blackmur modestly offers his own, which turns out to be the "technical," although a much-qualified and indeed debilitated version of that approach. It is, we are told, only the facts about a literary work that can be examined; the rest can "only be known, not talked about." But even the facts, it appears, can be arrived at completely only by direct apprehension—mere technical scrutiny is not enough. Art is defined as "the looking-glass of the pre-conscious," and criticism as "the establishment and evaluation . . . of the modes of making the pre-conscious consciously available." In other words, the critic undergoes a kind of mystic immersion in the object, as a result of which he produces a few odd bits of elucidation. The objection to this description, of course, is that it fails to provide the modern critic with what is his greatest need, a method for evaluating the fruits of the "pre-conscious." It reduces his role to that of a deep-sea diver who does not know what to do with the treasures that he brings up to the surface. He is still without a principle for relating his special perceptions to a larger frame of values, so that Mr. Blackmur has not really progressed in theory beyond the practice of his earlier and more useful essays. What his stimulating volume does most forcibly demonstrate, especially through its unresolved contradictions, is the immediate necessity of restoring to criticism a more intimate correspondence between what is talked about and what is known, between the literary object and the whole of our intellectual arrangement of experience. The critic's job is to learn once again how to combine the closest attention to the object with the most complete awareness of the world which surrounds it.

WILLIAM TROY

Barbusse's Stalin

Stalin. By Henri Barbusse. The Macmillan Company. $3.

"HISTORY," Thucydides once said, "cannot be written by a contemporary." Two recent Stalin biographies —"Stalin, a New World Seen Through One Man," by Henri Barbusse, and "Staline," by Boris Souvarine, published in France—give proof, if proof were needed, of the truth of this observation. If the world has yet to produce a man so great, so without fault, as the Stalin Barbusse presents to us in the pages of this latest of his works, it is equally true that Souvarine's representation of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a devil in the flesh is filled with partisan hate.

This is significantly illustrated by the manner in which the two authors treat the Stalin-Trotzky controversy. Russia's official historians have found it possible to write the history of the revolution without even mentioning the name of Leon Trotzky. Stalin's biographers, with greater sincerity but no less prejudice, have given much space and emotional emphasis to his historic adversary—to Trotzky's role in and after the October revolution. The illustrious author of "Feu," the first book on the World War and still one of the most important, makes no attempt to hide his disdain for Lenin's celebrated associate. To Barbusse—who died in Moscow as an honored member of the Russian Communist Party—Trotzky appears as a petty, vanity-ridden confusionist who would have wrecked the glorious Soviet experiment on the shoals of his political

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intransigence had it not been for the courageous interference of Stalin. Souvarine, expelled from the Communist Party of France in 1925 for his advocacy of Trotzky's cause, no longer follows in his footsteps. That he should invest him, nevertheless, with all the appurtenances of personal and political infallibility does credit to his affections if not to his impartiality. In short, these biographies will be read with profit only by those aware and always conscious of the atmosphere of bitter controversy in which they were produced.

The poet in Barbusse finds inspiration in the story of his hero's early youth. Joseph V. Djugashvili (Stalin is only one of the many aliases adopted by the Russian dictator during his anti-Czarist period) was born in 1881 in the little town of Gori. He was the son of a shoemaker who deserted his wife after the birth of her first child and left her to earn a scanty living as a small-town seamstress. At the age of eight young Joseph was accepted as a pupil in the local clerical school. Seven years later he was graduated into the seminary in Tiflis. On the rebellious Georgian the intense Russianism of his instructors had the effect of arousing an almost fanatical nationism and a hatred of everything connected with the Czarist regime.

From this to a general distrust of the seminary's teachings was a natural step. By way of Tolstoy and Darwin he and other young students steered a devious course toward the teachings of Marx. Books by Turgenev, Gorki, Marx, Kautzky, and Bebel found their way into the eager hands of these seekers. They were caught in the flood of that "live among the masses" movement which became the foundation of Russian socialism. At the end of four years of academic training Stalin renounced all thought of a clerical career to live as a "worker among workers" for the realization of Marxian teachings. As a wandering proletarian he earned his spurs in the revolutionary movement.

Stalin first met Lenin in December, 1905, after two years of desultory correspondence. With a great deal of detail Barbusse describes the later years of intimate cooperation between these two men, always with the clear intention of discrediting the claims of that "obstinate and verbose Menshevik" Trotzky. If one were to believe Barbusse, Lenin made no important decision without the advice and opinion of Stalin. According to Barbusse, the great father of the Russian Revolution had no more intimate friend, no more trusted comrade. He chooses to ignore Lenin's testament, that much-discussed document which is now generally accepted at its face value. From it the student of Russian affairs knows that Lenin was something less than enamored of Stalin's political wisdom. Barbusse makes capital for his hero out of the differences between the two men who shaped the destinies of the early period of the Soviet state. In the main his delineation of the early period is historically accurate but colored and distorted by his too partial preoccupation with the subject of his analysis.

To this reviewer it would seem that Barbusse, in his desire to represent Stalin as the great revolutionist, has missed his true significance. The man who stood at the helm of the Soviet Union in its second decade, steering it through the countless difficulties of adjustment to a capitalist world, deserves more objective treatment than this emotional Frenchman has power to give it. Stalin, whatever one may think of his influence on world communism, has made a lasting contribution to the upbuilding, industrialization, and collectivization of the Soviet Union. Under his guidance the standard of life of the Russian masses is being slowly but surely raised to a point where the hope that it will some day approximate that of the Western world seems no longer a vain delusion. Even the irreconcilable Souvarine admits that the recent history of the U. S. S. R. bears the indelible stamp of Stalin's personality, though it presents itself to his vision as the personality of a man of mediocre intelligence whose greatness lies in his absolute lack of scruples and in a Machiavellian talent for intrigue.

To this part of Stalin's activity Barbusse pays scant attention. Indeed, it must be something of a disappointment to admirers and followers of the Russian Communist leader to find that his biographer feels it necessary to distort historic fact and to detract from the greatness of Trotzky, the man who created the Red Army and saved the early Soviet Revolution from destruction, in order to present the subject of his theme in a more favorable light.

LUDWIG LORE

The Patmores

Portrait of My Family. By Derek Patmore. Harper and Brothers. $3.75.

"I HAVE respected posterity; and should there be a posterity which cares for letters I dare to hope that it will respect me." So with characteristic dignity Coventry Patmore wrote as an aging man, and if posterity has never rewarded him with popularity, he has the respect of the few who have a genuine love of fine letters. For Coventry Patmore was a man of unusual talents, intelligence, and sensibility, and it is only natural that his portrait should dominate his great-grandson's book about his family.

Now that our interest in the great Victorian men of letters is being revived, we are willing to count Coventry Patmore among them; and in his mysticism, his tortuous self-analysis, his delicate psychologizing, he seems closer to us than, say, Tennyson or Swinburne. His influence extended to men who left their influence on our contemporaries, through Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson, Robert Bridges; and in his last years he met and recognized the genius of the greatest poet of the last decade of the nineteenth century, the then unknown Gerard Manley Hopkins. Unlike most of their Victorian predecessors, these poets, Patmore among them, took a passionate interest in the technique of their craft and were fastidious and discriminating in their self-criticism.

Coventry Patmore's literary heritage was almost too ideal for a poet, as his great-grandson, Derek Patmore, shows. His father, Peter George Patmore, was a critic and essayist of the "Cockney School," a friend of Lamb, Coleridge, and Leigh Hunt, and particularly of Hazlitt; it was to him that Hazlitt wrote most of the letters in that painful book "Liber Amoris." As a critic he was one of the first to evaluate justly the genius of Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth, and as a wealthy man he was generous to less fortunate writers. A duel arising from a long-standing feud between the *London Magazine* and *Blackwood's* put an end to his career and left a shadowy disrepute—arising from unjustified gossip—from which his name still suffers.

When Coventry Patmore first began his career, his father's fortune had gone, and his father's name was a handicap, yet it was to his father's taste and encouragement that he owed the resolution to become a poet and the publication of his first book. This first book won the attention of Robert Browning, Landor, and Thackeray, and also won him the friendship of Tennyson. Of distinguished appearance and personality he became a welcome visitor to the literary salons of the day. His poverty was great until, at a dinner at the home of the widow of Barry Cornwall, he engaged the interest of Moncktom-Milnes. "And who is your lean young friend with the frayed coat cuffs?" asked Milnes of Mrs. Proctor. Mrs. Proctor gave him a copy of Patmore's newly published poems, and Milnes in contrition wrote: "His book is the work of a true poet and we must see that he never lacks bread and butter." A post at the British Museum was found for Patmore, and

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he was free to do his best work. Shortly after this stroke of luck he married Emily Andrews, that Victorian paragon who read Latin, Greek, and modern languages, and was an ideal housekeeper as well, and who inspired him to write epics of married love. Her death brought forth the most beautiful of his books, "The Unknown Eros." Emily Patmore, whose beauty and "sense of matronly ceremonial" made her a pre-Raphaelite heroine, deserves a little book to herself if only for having inspired the most exquisite of Browning's short lyrics, "Portrait." She died early of consumption leaving her husband with six small children and a pathetic plea to give them a stepmother. "She will watch tenderly over our children, and she must have a hard heart who will not love such pretty and amiable children as ours." And the children *were* remarkable. Two of them, Emily Honoria and Henry, were poets of promise and more, a promise obscured by early deaths. Emily, who became a nun, had a genuine vocation for the religious life, and in the devotional raptures of her few startling lyrics she resembles not so much her father as St. Theresa. Of Henry, Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: "We have lost a mind not only of wonderful promise, but even of wonderful achievement"; and from the one example of his poems given by Derek Patmore we can well believe this. Mr. Patmore's book, with its curious sidelights on Hopkins, Alice Meynell, and others of that circle, is of great value to the student of the period. Derek Patmore's style, however, is not Patmorian in carefulness; it is occasionally journalistic and over-garrulous.

MARYA ZATURENSKA

American Rooming-House

At Madame Bonnard's. By Joseph Vogel. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.

MR. VOGEL'S growing public will enjoy in his first novel much of the same sardonic humor which has distinguished his short stories in "The American Caravan" and the "little" magazines. "At Madame Bonnard's" is the story of a West Side rooming-house in New York. The house, its curious collection of American and foreign tenants, and Madame Bonnard with her discriminating laissez faire attitude toward the diurnal and nocturnal habits of her "roomers" are evidently employed by the author as symbolic aspects of a lower middle class caught in the rise of monopoly, economic depression, and new social problems. The key temperature of frustration and futility is skilfully established in the opening paragraph with the description of the feverish behavior of Angelo de Lalla, Madame Bonnard's sex-starved police dog; and the subsequent entrance of Mr. Wexel, agent for the real-estate company which is trying to buy Madame's lease in order to construct a huge apartment house on the site that includes her rooming-house, colors the setting with a nervous air of static impermanence which prevails throughout the book.

In carefully polished prose that is often sharp-toothed with caustic humor, Mr. Vogel succeeds in presenting the reader with several good portrait etchings. Verhulst, the virtuous athletic Dutchman who gradually finds himself deprived of his staunch physical and moral integrity; Clarence Jordan, the young antique-shop employee whose earnest search for Beauty and the Creative Life leads him to the "Principle of Mild Surprise"; Ann Golden and her husband the taxicab driver; the devout Mrs. Steiner, "chambermaid and general assistant"; and tall, graceful Carl Harrison, who drives his own vivacious wife away because she interferes with his propensity for peering through keyholes to watch the other female members of Madame Bonnard's rooming-house undress; these are a few of the dozen or more characters who stand out in clear though somewhat oversimplified outline.

In the general structure of his novel and the development of his theme, however, Mr. Vogel is less successful. His story is essentially dramatic, yet he tells it in the semi-ironic manner of a commentator, which makes the straightforward, realistic passages that pop up occasionally seem even more incongruous. Similarly, the theme of his story fails to indicate clearly its broad social implications. The author's belated efforts to define these implications more firmly—for instance, at the very end when he strives to ring a note of affirmation through one of the most nebulously drawn characters in the book—are, on the whole, too sketchy to be effective.

ABEL PLENN

Films

When Acting Counts

THE art of the motion picture is often discussed as if it did not include the art of acting. The director, the cutter, the photographer, and the author of the script are given their due—particularly the director, who indeed deserves the credit he gets, since it is only in his mind that the whole picture has its being. But the actor is dismissed as the malleable mime which in fact he usually is, so that the notion of his possessing a possible genius of his own is seldom taken with sufficient seriousness. This is wrong for at least two reasons. It does not promote the analysis and understanding of certain special problems to be solved by any actor for the screen; and it does not prepare us for the occasional pieces of fine work which come along.

It happens that within the past two weeks New York has been treated to four actors each of whom may be said to possess genius. The first of these in every respect is Charles Laughton, whose performance as Captain Bligh in "The Mutiny on the Bounty" (Capitol) fixes him in my mind at any rate as by far the best of living actors. I had thought him that before, but the current picture leaves no room for doubt. Frank Lloyd's direction has amplitude and clarity, and the film has many other merits besides the chief one—its making perfect use of such an artist. It is Mr. Laughton, however, whom we watch; and I cannot believe that this is to be accounted for on any other theory than that he has resources beyond the power of even the most brilliant direction to conceive. No man could be told to do what he does. He would have to know how—to know, for instance, how to *be* Captain Bligh, and how to be him in such fulness that no inconsistency appeared between the tyrant of the Bounty and the hero of the open boat on that impossible voyage to Timor. Impossible, but it was done; and we see that it could be done because this man whom until then we have loathed and feared becomes suddenly the object of our admiration. The piety we have despised because it seemed to be an aspect of perversion reveals itself as something too authentic for contempt; it is still terrible, perhaps, but it is pure, and it is the last evidence we need that Bligh carries in him the devil's own energy. That energy expresses itself in every muscle of Mr. Laughton's body, in every slightest lift of his eye, in the peculiar complexity of his smile, and—oddly enough—in the effeminacy of his gait. Nor is Mr. Laughton merely convincing in himself. He is also the cause of the ship's becoming alive whenever he looks at any part of it or at any man on it; wherever he walks there is reality. To say that nothing like this happens in the case of Clark Gable (Christian) or Franchot Tone (Byam) is merely to say that they are not actors. They are charming fellows, but when they get to Tahiti they seem strangely unaffected by the fact; they remain the nice tall persons we

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have always known, and Tahiti itself might just as well be Hollywood.

The other three actors of the outstanding four are to be seen in two rival versions of "Crime and Punishment." The best of them in my opinion is Harry Baur, who plays Porphyre in "Crime et Châtiment" at the Cinéma de Paris, and whose mastery both of the malevolence and of the wit which Dostoevski wrote into the part should establish him at the top of his profession. He has given himself to the role as completely as Mr. Laughton has given himself to his, with the result that he *is* the magistrate who tortured and fascinated Raskolnikov. And again his brilliance is something for which a director—in this case Pierre Chenal—has no right to claim full credit. His bearing, his voice, and his abrupt, eccentric actions are not the whole story by any means; these could have been dictated to him, but nobody else could have created the aura of plausibility which travels with him everywhere and which intensifies the anguish, the anxiety of the tale. Even the beautifully fluid and mannered movements of Pierre Blanchar as Raskolnikov, walking through the film almost without pause like one possessed, do not accomplish what Baur's more varied performance as Porphyre does. The result in the case of M. Blanchar is a certain monotony, a certain strain, which tends to lower rather than heighten the pitch of the piece—a danger perhaps unavoidable, since Josef von Sternberg, the director of "Crime and Punishment" (the Music Hall), has failed in exactly the same way to avoid it. His Raskolnikov, Peter Lorre, is monotonous of course after another fashion, and that fashion is not without its attending excellence; yet the net effect, curiously enough, is one of understatement. The better the novel the more difficult to translate it as a film. The tension which Dostoevski maintained through hundreds of eloquent pages can only be aimed at in the studio; it cannot be achieved for the simple reason that there is too little time at the camera's disposal, and too few words. Even so handicapped the two films are extraordinarily pitiful and powerful—the French one much more so than the American one, but both of them miles high above the average.

MARK VAN DOREN

Drama

Black Bread and a Circus

"MOTHER," the new piece produced by the Theater Union at the Civic Repertory Theater, earns its right to the well-worn phrase "an interesting experiment." Obviously it is not addressed to the average theatergoer, for it is aimed even more directly than some of the union's other offerings straight at that special audience which takes delight in any exposition of the class struggle in more or less dramatic terms. Nevertheless, its author, that same Brecht who wrote the "Three-Penny Opera," is one of the group of radical and eccentric dramatists developed in post-war Germany, and like several of the others he demonstrates the fact that the left-wing writers of Europe have rather more of something besides their conviction to go on than most of the less-experienced American "proletarian" dramatists have. It is not that he is less doctrinaire or preachy. Ostensibly no one could be more exclusively concerned with a simple lesson. Yet somehow the thing seems to have grown out of a richer cultural soil. It shows a sense of style and a certain flavor of individual temperament even in the presentation of official doctrine. Whether the author has had time to develop these qualities within the framework of a new culture or whether

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he is merely, and against his will, trailing still some clouds of glory from a previous existence as a "bourgeois" artist, I do not know. But whether "Mother" is good art or bad art, it does "exist" as art in the sense that many American proletarian plays do not.

In Germany Brecht worked for the half-futurist, half-communist régisseur Piscator; and for the staging of "Mother" he has adopted Piscator's whole bag of tricks, the guiding principle of which is the effort to intrude instead of to hide both the machinery of the stage and the machinery of the dramaturgy. On entering the theater one finds the proscenium flanked by two large inscriptions, one drawn from Thomas Jefferson and the other from Karl Marx. When the curtain goes up, it discloses a bare stage upon which a simple, undersized set has been placed, while the two pianists who are to provide the occasional music are in full view and the row of spot-lights is frankly (or is it ostentatiously?) unconcealed by even an old-fashioned "teaser." When occasion demands, the actors advance to the front of the stage and either recount what has happened between the scenes or, in confidential soliloquies, expose their mental processes. For good measure, a projection screen is permanently installed above the level of the sets, and upon it are flashed lantern slides, sometimes captioning the scenes or announcing the "chants," sometimes giving photographic illustration of events referred to, and sometimes presenting more or less relevant statistics concerning, for example, Russian casualties during the World War.

The effect of all these is the achievement of a sort of guileful guilelessness and a sort of pseudo-naivete. Gorki's novel, from which is taken the story of a mother who became a revolutionary leader after entering "the party" merely to protect her son, is reduced to a series of simple tableaux pointing a moral in the most elementary terms and achieving a kind of childlike, nursery-tale directness in the telling which suggests the Russian production of "The Princess Turandot." Instead of attempting either to translate the moral into ordinary dramatic terms or to slip it in as unobtrusively as possible, the lesson is everywhere thrust directly forward. The characters convert one another to the cause by explaining in words of one syllable what is meant by "ownership of the means of production" or "class solidarity"; and when the chorus advances to chant to the simple forceful music of Hanns Eisler it does not hesitate to sing such downright sentences as "Come, get up, for the party is in danger," or "Then you must take the entire state and turn it upside down." If the result is to make "Mother" an, at times, almost painfully unashamed didactic charade, it is also to confer upon it the virtue of being quite frankly what it is. Like the otherwise quite different "Waiting for Lefty" I can imagine it being very effectively used as part of a dramatic repertory intended to propagandize a simple working-class audience—though I must add that its exposition of very elementary doctrine concerning the principles of the class struggle seems to me a work of supererogation so far as the usual Theater Union audience is concerned. There is a very good performance by Stanley Wood as the teacher, and there is a genuinely outstanding one by Helen Henry, who plays not only with a fine sense of style but also in a manner which suggests very subtly the simple, humorous shrewdness of the mother.

To turn now from such figurative bread to a literal circus, it should be announced that "Jumbo" (Hippodrome) comes off in absolutely first-rate fashion. Billy Rose, its entrepreneur, is apparently afflicted with that form of megalomania which is the soul of a Big Show. Nothing but the most elephantine theater as well as the most theatrical elephant would do. Neither would anything except the best-known band leader, the most popular comedian, and so on, and so on. But the real news is that there is nothing mouselike about what the various laboring mountains brought forth. Far more successfully than one might expect, the whole thing comes off and gets over. Perhaps I should have some difficulty in describing exactly what I saw, but if I came away with only a general dazed impression of ferocious animals, dazzling girls on bareback horses, daring young men on flying trapezes, and all the rest of it, why, that is exactly the kind of impression that a circus ought to produce. Not that "Jumbo" is all old-fashioned circus. As the press agent proclaims, "To say that it is a blend of Barnum and Bailey with 'Rio Rita' is skirmishing with understatement." I sat close enough to testify that the girls would do credit to any revue. Jimmy Durante is very funny; Paul Whiteman is vastly impressive if slightly abashed on a white horse; and A. Robins is probably the best clown in the classical tradition living today. It's a fine show and, quite literally, better than a circus.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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